Stories to tell the littlest ones

by Sara Cone Bryant

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STORIES TO TELL THE LITTLEST ONES

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U . S . A

TO

T. F. B.

OUR BEST PLAYMATE

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED
BY THE LITTLEST ONES
AND ME

Acknowledgments

For the Swabian verses I have to thank my husband, who heard the originals in childhood from his grandfather. The first telling of "The Little White Boat" and the inspiration for a number of other stories came from the same interested source.

The spirit and outline of the two apple stories I owe to Mr. James H. Bowditch, the noted landscape architect. While I was very ill he told the little adventures to my husband, to tell to me, for the whiling away of a heavy time; and I have made them into stories with his consent. I regret that I cannot fully transmit in them the rare savor of gentle humor and kindly philosophy that Mr. Bowditch's personality infused into the original.

The Scotch rhymes with their music were taught my children by Miss Jessie Blaine, their kindest of nurses, and a shining example of the national strength and wholesomeness of character. She learned the funny bits literally at her mother's knee, and in passing them on to my children, used the quaint steps and gestures which had come to hers from a still earlier mother. The rhymes are undoubtedly only fragments, but even as such seem to have a perennial charm for the "littlest ones."

Foreword

THIS little book is the outgrowth of a custom in my house, known to the children as "Telling the Rabbit Story."

Ever since my little girl and boy were born, I have been in the habit of singing them rhymes or telling them stories every day, a while before sleepy-time. One of the earliest connected stories they ever heard was Beatrix Potter's exquisite little tale, "Peter Rabbit." They were very fond of this, and were much attracted by the name and the pictures of Peter himself. So it happened that they asked for more adventures of Peter Rabbit, and I fell into the way of introducing the little hero into many of my inventions, until at last no story was complete if it did not begin: "Once when Peter Rabbit was —"

For two years the story hour at my house was always called the "Rabbit

story." "Mother, will you be home for the 'Rabbit story'?" the children used to say, when I went out.

Gradually other loves have taken their place in the home-story world, and I have told my boy and girl many tales of many kinds, true, fairy, and "foolish," as they call humorous stories, but they still love the one that begins with "Peter Rabbit."

Once in a while, in the long series of days, some happy inspiration has given me a better thought than usual, and a real story has popped out of my mouth in place of the mediocre inventions of habit. These few real stories have been retold "by request" of the original audience, and told again to larger audiences many times. It has seemed to me that the best of them might prove of value to other teachers and mothers of very little children, for the demand is continuous, and the supply of material suitable for such tiny hearers is exceedingly small.

FOREWORD

A few of these stories are my own adaptations from old or foreign tales, as the reader will note in the following pages. But the larger number are entirely original, and grew spontaneously out of the mood of the hour.

I do not claim any wonderful qualities for the little stories so made and gathered. Very young children have liked them, and I have been willing that my own very young children should hear them. The latter is an acid test which has counted out many a famous old story, and the former disposes of all too many modern ones. So I hope that these may prove useful to grown-up friends and joyous to little boys and girls.

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Stories to Tell The Littlest Ones

The littlest one of all

ONCE there was a tiny girl baby. She was so small that her father could carry her in one hand, her soft little head resting on his arm, and her fairy-like feet curled up on his fingers. The tiny baby's eyes were black and shiny, and very, very big.

Sometimes she cried, and then her father used to carry her about the room, swinging her gently in his arms and singing to her this odd little song: —

"Eeny, weeny, bottle o' milk,
Eeny, weeny, fine as silk!
Her hannies are tiny,
Her footies are wee,
But her EYES are big as big can be!"

When the tiny baby girl grew bigger she had a big doll, and she liked to carry it about and play it was a baby. So her father taught her the odd little song, and the little girl sang it to her baby doll. Here she is in the picture, singing: —

"Eeny, weeny, bottle o' milk,
Eeny, weeny, fine as silk!
Her hannies are tiny,
Her footies are wee,
But her EYES are big as big can be!"

The Dog and the Kitty Cats

ONCE there was a big gray mother cat who had a little gray kitten. And the mother cat lay down on the sunny porch and said, "Miaouw, come here; miaouw, come here!"

And the little gray kitten cuddled up close to her mother's warm, soft fur, and said, "Pur-r-r, pur-r-r!"

Just then along came the big black dog from next door, and said, "Bow-wow! Bow-wow!" And he frightened the two kitty cats so that they ran as fast as they could, away from there.

At last the mother cat found a cozy corner 'way out behind the barn, and she lay down again, quite out of breath, and said,

"Miaouw, come here; miaouw, come here!"

So the little gray kitty cuddled down as close as she could to her mother's soft, warm fur, and she said, "Pur-r-r, pur-r-r!"

But just as they had settled themselves for a nice comfortable time, round the corner came the big black dog again, and said, "Bow-wow! Bow-wow!"

Oh, how they jumped! They ran, ran, ran, as fast as they could, till they were out of sight; and they never stopped running till they found a place far down in the orchard, under the old apple tree, where they thought the big dog would n't find them.

Then the mother cat lay down again quite tired out, and said, "Miaouw, come here; miaouw, come here!"

And the little gray kitty crept as close as she possibly could, and cuddled wearily against the mother cat's soft, warm fur, and said, faintly, "Pur-r-r, pur-r-r!"

But no sooner were they settled than up came that miserable black dog again, and said, "Bow-wow! Bow-wow-wow!!"

And that mother cat just stood up, and she arched her back, and she stiffened her tail, and she made a *terrible* face to the dog, and said, "S-s-s-s-s!!" And what do you think? The old black dog was so frightened that he just put his tail between his legs and slunk off, as fast as he could! Because he knew very well that the mother cat would scratch his face when she looked like that.

And *then* the mother cat lay down comfortably, and said, "Miaouw, come here; miaouw, come here!"

And the little gray kitty cuddled down close and warm and happy in her soft, warm coat, and said, "Pur-r-r! Pur-r-r!"

An Old Five-Finger Saying

Adapted from the Swabian

HERE'S a round silver dollar!
We'll go to the market,
And buy a fat sheep,
A pony to ride,
And a bossy to keep,
And a *wee, wee, wee* little piggy, beside!

First draw an imaginary circle in the baby's tiny open palm, then touch the five little fingers in turn, beginning with the thumb, just as we do in the familiar "This little pig went to market." Quite little babies like this very much.

THE GOOSEY GANDER

ELIZABETH and James came to the grown-up table on Christmas, and ate roast goose. Between the courses, because it was hard for such little people to wait quietly, mother told them the story of the Goosey-Gander Who Would n't Do as He was Told.

Once there was a young Goosey-Gander who thought himself very smart. He never would stay in the yard where all the other ducks and geese were, but went wandering along the grass by the roadside, and even in the road. The old geese said to him, "You will get hurt if you go there"; but he only said, "Quack! Quack! I know better."

And they said, "Look out for yourself when you hear a big noise"; but he only said, "Quack! Quack! I can look out for myself without your help."

So they stopped talking to him.

One day he was picking round in the grass very close to the white road, when he suddenly heard a loud "Honk! Honk!" "Pooh," said the Goosey-Gander, "what goose are you? I can make one as loud as that. Honk! Honk!"

And he did n't get out of the way.

The next instant a glaring red automobile came rushing along the white road, with a "Honk! Honk!" as loud as thunder. It passed the Goosey-Gander with a roar and a rush, and such a swirl of wind and dust came with it that it swept him up in the air against the hedge. He was like to die with fright! He flew and scrambled and tumbled over the hedge into the yard, screaming, "Honk! Honk! Quack! Quack! Honk! Honk!"

And do you know, he was so frightened at automobiles after that, that the faintest sound of a horn would set him running. The other geese used to tease him by coming up close behind him, and saying, "Honk! Honk!" Every time they did it the little Goosey-Gander would fly straight up in the air, with a fuss and a flurry, and he would say, "Quack! Quack! Oh! Honk!"

And he never played in the road after that.

An old Five-Finger Saying

THE big pig said, "I want some corn!"

The next pig said, "Where are you going to get it?"

The third pig said, "In Gran'pa's barn."

The fourth pig said, "Ah! I 'll tell!"

And the last little pig said, "Wee, wee, wee, wee! You can't get over the barn-door sill!"

Touch the little fingers in turn, beginning with the thumb, as in "This little pig went to market."

The little Bull Calf

ONCE upon a time there was a Little Bull Calf. His mother was the Cow that Jumped Over the Moon and his father was the Bull in the China Shop — both quite famous persons.

The Little Bull Calf had inherited the characteristics of both parents. That means,

he was a little like his mother and a little like his father. And *that* means, he liked to jump high and run fast; and he never would look where he was going!

Such a lot of trouble he got into on that account! Every one was always telling him, "Look where you're going"; but he usually did not look until he had gone; by that time it was too late.

One day he ran and jumped into the garden and spoiled the early lettuce. The Farmer was so angry that he nearly sold the Little Bull Calf to the Butcher. The Little Bull Calf was dreadfully sorry, for he didn't at all mean to spoil the garden. His mother said, "Why didn't you look where you were going?" But he couldn't remember.

And one day he ran and jumped into the wire fence and hurt himself badly. His father scolded him and said he hoped the bump would teach him to look where he was going. But he couldn't remember.

And finally this is what happened to him.

Early in the shiny morning he was standing in the pasture, and his mother was far at the other end, watching the house, which she could clearly see. The sweet fresh air made the little Bull Calf feel so good that he began to run and jump.

Of course he did n't look where he was going, and presently he jumped right into the fence, as he had done once before. But this time he struck a spot where the fence was weak, and it gave way, and let him through into the big field of the world.

The Little Bull Calf ran and jumped, and ran and jumped, until he was far, far away, in a place he had never seen before. By and by he came to the top of a hill. Now at the foot of that hill was a Quaky Bog. A Quaky Bog is a place all water and mud — deep, soft mud that won't hold anything up, but lets it sink and sink till it 's out of sight. A bad place, indeed.

The Little Bull Calf was so full of fun that he began to jump and run downhill, and he never looked where he was going, so he did n't see the Quaky Bog lying there.

Faster and faster he ran, — down, down, down, — till suddenly, *plump! — splash!* — he landed on all four feet in the horrid mud.

Splish, splash, came the dirty water over his pretty coat, and, *kerchunck*, went his hoofs into the soft mud.

Then the Little Bull Calf did look where he had gone, and saw what a Quaky Bog he was in, and he tried to get out of it that very minute. But, oh, dear, he could n't! As fast as he tried to draw up one foot, the others sank deeper. The harder he struggled, the more the hateful mud oozed all round his body. At last he had sunk so far that he could no longer bend his knees, and at that the poor Little Bull Calf saw that the Quaky Bog would swallow him up, all of him, if some one did n't help him quickly.

He was terribly frightened. But he was a brave little calf, and he knew his mother would never let that Quaky Bog swallow him if she knew where he was. So he began to call to her, just as loud and long as he could: "Ma—ma—ma!"

It was a long, long way from the Quaky Bog to the Home Pasture, for the little calf had run very fast while he was n't looking; and his voice was not very strong because he was not very big, himself. But Mother Cow's ears were very sharp, and presently she heard a faint sound; "Ma—ma," it said.

Mother Cow lifted her head and stopped chewing her cud. "What is that?" she thought; "it sounds like my little calf." She looked all round, but the little calf was nowhere in sight. She ran into the pasture where he had been, but he was not there. And still came the sounds, "Ma—Ma."

Then the Mother Cow saw the broken fence and she knew instantly that the Little

Bull Calf was in trouble. And loud as she could she began to call for help. "Moo — moo — where — where!"

Father Bull, over in his own yard, heard her and knew something was wrong. And he lifted up his great head, and roared with his mighty voice, "Come! c-o-m-e!"

The Farmer heard them both and came to see what was the matter. No Little Bull Calf in the pasture; a broken fence; little hoof-marks across the field, — the Farmer saw at once what had happened. And when he heard that faint, frightened "Ma — ma — ma," he turned to his man and said, "I believe the little rascal is in the Quaky Bog. Bring ropes and a plank." And he jumped on Bessy, his horse, and rode fast to the hill above the Quaky Bog.

My, but they were just in time! The Little Bull Calf had sunk till his four legs were out of sight, and his stiff little tail was lying in the mud.

With planks they got to him, and with

ropes they found a way to lift him. And with strong Bessy's help they pulled him out at last and saved him from the dreadful Quaky Bog. The Farmer's man cleaned off his pretty coat, and on his little tottering legs he went slowly back to his mother.

And his mother licked him all over with her kind, warm tongue, and cuddled him, and talked to him till he stopped trembling. Then she said, "I hope this will teach you at last to look where you are going."

And it did.

An Old Patting Play

(*Very freely adapted from the Swabian*)

PAT the dough for baking,
Cookies are a-making,
Cookies take good things a-plenty,
Five or ten or twelve or twenty.

One, two, three —
Guess how many I have now?
(Child guesses)

No, I have more things than that,
Dough must have another pat!

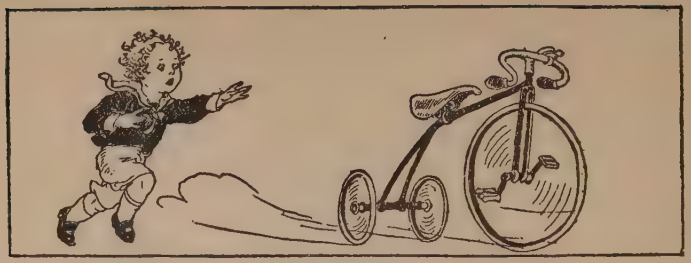
One, two, three —
Guess how many I have now?
(Child guesses)

Oh, you've guessed too many, so
Once again I pat my dough!

One, two, three —
Guess how many I have now?
(Child guesses)

Yes, you've guessed the number right!
No more pats for dough to-night.

In this game, hold the child in your arms or across your knees, and pat or rub the little back rhythmically. At the "one, two, three," touch the shoulders with the finger. You may make the child guess as often as you wish.



The Velocipede that went by itself

Once there was a Little Velocipede that came to Jimmy Boy on Christmas. It was shiny, and strong, and had rubber tires. Jimmy Boy rode it all day long, round and round the halls, in and out the living-room, in and out the library, and back down the hall again.

Jimmy Boy rode faster and faster, in and out amongst the furniture, till mother said it made her fairly dizzy, and all the time ringing his little bell: *Ding-dong, ting-a-ling-ling!*

At last mother said, "You have ridden that velocipede so much I should almost think it could go by itself."

Jimmy Boy was standing by the Veloci-

pede with his foot ready to jump on. Suddenly the Little Velocipede started off by itself! It rolled down the hall, gently at first, then quickly and more quickly.

"Stop, stop," cried Jimmy, "I want to get on!"

But the Little Velocipede only rolled faster, and turned the corner into the living-room. Faster and ever faster it went, round corners, through rooms, out of doors and in at doors. And pretty soon its little bell began to ring.

"*Ding-dong! Come along!*" it said. "*Ding-dong! Come along!*"

Jimmy ran after it, and his mother ran after Jimmy, and the maid ran after mother, and all the while the Little Velocipede rolled more swiftly and rang its bell harder. It skimmed by the chairs, and whisked past the tables, and as it went the bell said, —

"Ting-a-ling-ling! Ring-a-ting-ting!
Did n't touch a thing! Did n't touch a thing!"

Just then some one opened the door, and out raced the Little Velocipede, down the stairs and down the steps and along the walk. And out raced Jimmy and mother and the maid after it.

But the Little Velocipede rolled faster and faster, and its little bell said, —

"He-he-he-he! He-he-he-he!
Can't catch me! Can't catch me!"

So they called the Postman to help.

But the Postman had a lame knee and he could n't catch the Little Velocipede. It fairly flew up the street, and as it went it rang its little bell to say, —

"Ding-ding, letter ring!
Ding-dong, step along!"

So they called the Policeman to help.

But the Policeman was very fat and he could n't catch the Little Velocipede. It only shook its little handle bars and rang its little bell to say, —

"Look at that! Far too fat!
You're too slow; I must go!"

So they called the Fire Engine to help. And it came with a clamor and clang, and a snap and a bang, down the street. But the Little Velocipede only rolled more swiftly and rang its little bell like mad. It said, —

"Put on speed! Put on speed!
I'm the fast Velocipede!"

And when the Fire Engine did put on speed, the Little Velocipede said, —

"Ding-a-ding-ding-ding!
Going to a fire, on a rubber tire,
Whiz and whirr and hum and purr,
Chug and choo! I'll beat you!
Ding-a-ding-ding-ding-ding!"

And the Fire Engine could n't catch the Little Velocipede.

Then Jimmy Boy began to cry, "Oh, please, Little Velocipede, don't leave me! Please, dear Little Velocipede, come back."

At that the Little Velocipede stopped short on the corner, whirled round on its hind wheels, and rolled home again!

And the Fire Engine and the Policeman and the Postman and the maid and mother and Jimmy Boy ran home after it.

When the Little Velocipede got to the front steps, it lifted its little front wheel and flew right up them, still ringing its little bell and saying, —

"Could n't catch me, could n't match me,
Raced 'em all and beat 'em to it,
Everybody saw me do it!
Now I'm coming home to stay,
Never going to run away
Any more, any day."

Jimmy Boy and mother and the maid ran up the steps after it and shut the door, but the Fire Engine and the Postman and the Policeman went home.

When Jimmy Boy got to the top of the stairs, the Little Velocipede was standing quietly in the hall. Its little bell was tink-

ling very faintly, and Jimmy *thought* it said, —

"No, indeed, no — more — speed.
I'm — the — good — Velocipede."

But Jimmy never was sure, and I don't know, because that was the last time the little bell ever spoke, and never again did the Velocipede go by itself.

Three Jingles

About the Rain

When the rain beats against the windows, and the water runs down in long streaks on the glass, the little boy and girl tease Nursie to take a walk with them. Then Father says the rain is talking to them. "Listen, the rain says,—

'If you come out, I will wet you;
If you stay in, I can't get you!'"

Out the Window

On the great white snow
The sun shines so,
And the smoke does blow, blow, blow!

In the Barnyard

Chickabiddy, Henpenny, Rooster, too.
Chickabiddy runs when I say, "Shoo!"
Henpenny flies when I say, "Boo!"
Big brown rooster says, "Kikikeriku!
Not afraid of you! Not afraid of you!"

WHO DISCOVERED THE MAPLE SUGAR

A LONG, long time ago, when there was no one in the great forests but the Indians and the Animals, the Little Field Mouse lived in an open glade in the North Country. His name was Momee, and he was very happy. Food was plenty, water was near, and life was full of cozy things.

But one winter the snow fell frightfully deep, covering every possible thing to eat, and the cold lasted so long that the snow did n't melt till very late. It was the longest and hardest winter the Animals had ever known. Long before the snow melted, Momee was hungry. He had used all his win-

ter store of nuts and seeds, and there were no juicy roots and young shoots of green to be had.

In all the world around him, nothing showed above the deep snow but just the trees. And Momee could n't eat them.

But at last came a day when he was so hungry that he felt as if he could even eat a tree! He ran along over the hard icy crust to the Fir Tree, standing so tall and dark, its sighing branches far above his sight. With his sharp little teeth, he nibbled a bit of the bark.

Oh, it was puckery! Puckery and pungent and dreadful. The Little Field Mouse had to rub his nose in the snow to take the "feel" away.

He ran away over the icy crust till he came to the Pine Tree, giant of the woods, where there was always a little less snow than anywhere else, because the Pine gave out warmth from its body. He nibbled a bit of its bark, close to the ground.

Oh, but it was sharp and shivery and horrid! It made his mouth burn and sting. He had to rub his tongue in the snow to take the taste away.

So he ran away over the icy crust till he came to the Hemlock Tree, standing with its brothers and shading all the deep gorge with its great soft branches. He nibbled a little of its bark, close to the ground.

Oh, oh, dear! It was so bitter and bad that the Little Field Mouse spit it out, quick as a wink, and took a whole mouthful of snow to wash the taste out. Whee, but it was bad!

The Little Field Mouse was so discouraged that he ran away home and didn't come back that day.

But the next day he was so hungry that he had to try again. He felt as if he could eat anything! So he ran along over the icy crust till he came to the Beech Tree, standing so stately with its silver trunk, near the

Hemlock. And very carefully he nibbled at it, close to the ground.

It was n't so very bad. It did n't hurt his mouth, anyway, so he nibbled some more. But the Beech Tree's bark was tough, and had no taste in particular, and after a while the Little Field Mouse decided it would n't stop his hunger to nibble on that, — not if he nibbled all night.

So he ran away over the icy crust till he came to the Maple Tree, with its cloudy gray stem, and its pleasant look. He nibbled a little at its bark very carefully.

Mmmmm! It was nice! It had a faint, sweet, fascinating flavor!

The Little Field Mouse nibbled some more, very eagerly, and some more. It was truly good. It was a little sweet. He nibbled and nibbled, until he made a little hole through the outer bark; the sap came oozing out in a big drop. The Little Field Mouse licked it up. Oh, my! Oh, *my!* It was sweet, the sweetest thing that the

Little Field Mouse had ever tasted. It was delicious.

The Little Field Mouse nibbled and licked, and the more he tasted the better he liked it. The sap oozed out of the hole he made, with that faint, delicious sweetness about it, like nothing else in the whole forest. And he ate till he was quite over being hungry.

Every day he came back and sipped his wonderful maple sap, and in a short time, long before the ground was bare enough to furnish other food, he began to grow fat and sleek.

One morning as he was running along very early, he met Eagle Feather full in the path. Eagle Feather was ten years old, and son of the Chief Hunter of his tribe. He was a nice boy, brave, and sharp-eyed, and kind.

"Hi, Little Brother," he said to Momee. "How sleek you look, this hard winter! Had you so great store of nuts laid by?"

"No, Big Brother," said the Little Field Mouse, "not nuts; I am fat with the sap of a tree."

"Tease me not!" said Eagle Feather sharply.

"Nay, I do not tease," said the Little Field Mouse very quickly. "See, I will show you."

And he ran ahead of Eagle Feather to the Maple Grove. "This I have nibbled," he said.

Eagle Feather looked and saw marks of nibbling on one tree and another.

"Is it good, Little Brother?" he asked.

"Most good," said Momee. "Taste! There is enough sap in the forest for all."

Eagle Feather bent and looked where a big drop of maple sap was shining on the bark. He touched it with his finger and put his finger in his mouth. Then he grunted, a funny Indian grunt of surprise and pleasure. "It is sweet!" he said.

"Most sweet," said Momee.

Eagle Feather made a hole in the bark, with his sharp-edged horn knife, above the nibbled place; as the sap oozed, he held his fingers to it, and tasted again.

"This thing is good drink," he said. "Keep you to your trees, Little Brother, and I will take those of the hillside; I have a thought."

So after the Little Field Mouse had run away home, Eagle Feather went swiftly to his father's lodge where his Granny lived and took care of him, and of her he begged one of the earthen water crocks. Then he went back to the Maple Grove and drove a pointed piece of wood into the bark of the Maple Tree, to reach through to the sap, and when he had a hole through, he shaped a kind of trough of wood and drove one end into the opening so that the sap would run down it. And below, he set the earthen water crock begged from Granny. Into this the sap must run.

Next day as the brown-faced, sharp-eyed

Grandmother sat at her lodge door weaving baskets, Eagle Feather came stepping cautiously from the forest, bearing the great earthen crock. Silently and mysteriously he set it down before Grandmother, and told her to taste it.

Granny tasted and found the sweet, faint, fascinating flavor delightful.

"What is it, and where from?" she said.

"Sap of the Maple; 't is a secret!" said Eagle Feather, his black eyes shining.

"Not harmful, then," said the Grandmother, and tasted again. "Ugh! 't is good drink," she said then.

Eagle Feather was delighted. He felt very proud of himself, and very pleased to think there was so handy a supply of sweets for him.

Pretty soon, Grandmother looked up from her thoughts. "I believe this sap would be the sweeter for boiling," she said. "I will try."

That night was a wonderful meal for

Eagle Feather and for his father, the mighty Hunter. On cakes, baked on hot stones, they ate the maple sap boiled down to a thick syrup. And it was good — ah, how good it was! Nothing like it had ever gone into little Eagle Feather's mouth before. He ate and ate, till every bit was gone, and after the supper, though the moon was bright in the forest, and little Indians belonged under the furs, he stole forth with his crock and set it under the Maple Tree again.

Every day Granny boiled sap and every day they feasted, till the Little Field Mouse was no fatter or sleeker than they.

Then, one day, Granny forgot to take the sap from the fire, because there was great excitement in the lodges; Great Bear had killed much moose at the hunt, and the village was full of talk. When she remembered her cooking and ran to the fire, the sap had all boiled away to sugar! Granny looked at it in surprise, then she stirred some of it

with a stick and tasted it. *Then* she called Eagle Feather.

"Taste!" she said, and little Eagle Feather tasted.

"Oh, Granny!" he said, "oh, Granny!" And his eyes shone like stars. "It is the best thing I have ever tasted. How made you that?"

"'T is the Maple sap, cooked away," said Granny. "Never have I eaten such sweetness."

So from that day, all the spring, in the lodge of Eagle Feather's father there was both syrup and sugar of Maple sap, and Eagle Feather ate to his heart's content.

And that is the way we came to have Maple Sugar. But the Little Field Mouse discovered it first.

Two Little Kittens

From Mother Goose

Two little kittens, one stormy night,
Began to quarrel and then to fight;
One had a mouse, and the other had none,
And that 's the way the quarrel begun.

"I 'll have that mouse," said the bigger cat.
"*You 'll* have that mouse? We 'll see about that!"
"I *will* have that mouse," said the older son.
"You *shan't* have the mouse," said the little one.

THE LITTLEST ONES

I told you before 't was a stormy night
When these two little kittens began to fight;
The old woman seized her sweeping broom,
And swept the two kittens right out of the room.

The ground was covered with frost and snow,
And the two little kittens had nowhere to go;
So they laid them down on the mat at the door,
While the old woman finished sweeping the floor.

Then they crept in, as quiet as mice,
All wet with the snow, and as cold as ice,
For they found it was better that stormy night,
To lie down and sleep than to quarrel and fight.

When Peter Rabbit had the Earache

ONCE Peter Rabbit had the earache. He kept his hand over his ear, and cried.

So Mother Rabbit started out with her shawl and basket, to go to the little flannel bush in the hollow, and get some leaves for a poultice. She thought she would go by the short cut, across the brook by the old pear tree.

But when she got into the path, it was all muddy, and full of little puddles of

water. Every time she tried to give a good jump, she landed in a puddle, and splashed her shawl and basket. And she could n't hurry, because the mud was so sticky.

So she had to go round by the long way, over the hill, past the white birch trees. As she was hurrying along, she met Brother Fox.

"Where are you going so fast, Mother Rabbit?" he said.

And Mother Rabbit said, —

"I 'm going to the little flannel bush in the hollow, to get some leaves to make a poultice for my darling little Peter, who has the earache."

"Oh, dear Mother Rabbit," said Brother Fox, "all my four little Foxes have the earache, too; they are sitting with their hands over their ears, crying. Let me go with you, to get some leaves to make a poultice."

So they hurried on, together.

Just beyond the white birch trees they

met Johnny Woodchuck. "Hullo," he said, "where are you going so fast, you two?"

"We are going to the little flannel bush in the hollow," said Mother Rabbit, "to get some leaves to make a poultice for my darling little Peter, who has the earache, and for the little Foxes, who have the earache, too."

"Oh, let me go with you," said Johnny Woodchuck. "My little brother and sister both have the earache; they are sitting with their hands over their ears, crying."

So they hurried on, together.

When they came to the little flannel bush in the hollow, they stripped off the leaves, and Mother Rabbit filled her basket, and Brother Fox filled his pockets, and Johnny Woodchuck filled his hat. Then they hurried home.

When they got to the white birch trees, Johnny Woodchuck said, — "I don't know how to make a poultice, Mother Rabbit."

"Well, I will make it for you, after I make one for my darling little Peter," said Mother Rabbit.

"Thank you," said Johnny Woodchuck; and he ran away home to tell his little brother and sister to be patient.

When they came to a turn in the path, Brother Fox said, "How do you make a poultice, Mother Rabbit?"

"I'll make it for you, just as soon as I've made one for my darling little Peter," said Mother Rabbit.

"Thank you, very much," said Brother Fox; and he ran away home to tell the little Foxes to be patient.

Mother Rabbit hurried on home, and went up the path, and opened the door. There sat her darling little Peter with his hand over his ear, crying. So Mother Rabbit put down her basket and shawl, and she took the flannel leaves and made a warm, warm poultice, and put it in a warm, warm cloth, and tied it on her darling little

Peter's ear, and put him in his warm, warm beddy.

And he fell fast asleep.

As soon as her darling little Peter was fast asleep, Mother Rabbit put on her shawl, and took her basket over her arm, and started out for Brother Fox's house. When she got there, she knocked at the door and went in. And there sat the four little Foxes, with their hands over their ears, crying.

So Mother Rabbit fixed up the fire, and she made four warm, warm poultices, and put them in warm, warm cloths, and tied them on the four little Foxes' ears. And then she put the little Foxes in their warm, warm beddies.

And they all fell fast asleep.

As soon as they were fast asleep, Mother Rabbit took up her bonnet and shawl, and hurried to Johnny Woodchuck's house. When she got there, she knocked at the door and went in. And there sat the little

brother and sister Woodchuck, with their hands over their ears, crying.

Mother Rabbit found the fire all fixed, and she made two warm, warm poultices, and put them in warm, warm cloths, and tied them on the little Woodchucks' ears, and then she put them in their warm, warm beddies, and they fell fast asleep.

As soon as they were fast asleep, Mother Rabbit took up her basket and shawl and hurried home. And she opened the door and went in. And there was her darling little Peter, fast asleep.

So Mother Rabbit, who was very tired from hurrying, went to bed, too, and she fell fast asleep.

And the next morning, darling little Peter was all well of his earache, and the four little Foxes were all well of their earaches, and the little brother and sister Woodchuck were all well of *their* earaches.

And that 's the end of the story.

Measuring Song

A calisthenics game to be played by one or more children

MEASURE the wool,
And measure the yarn,
And count the sheep in your father's barn.

Measure the thread,
And measure the silk,
And count the buckets of creamy milk.

Measure the barley,
And measure the grain,
And put your right foot out in the rain.

Measure the oats,
And measure the rye,
And put your left foot out to dry.

Measure the hummock,
And measure the hill,
And reach for the mountain higher still.

Measure the clouds,
And measure the sky,
And stretch your hands to the birds that fly.

Measure the windmill,
To and fro,
And round and round at last you go!

In playing this game the children do the following exercises: —

First verse. Stretch the arms out sidewise from the chest; hands are stretched at "wool" and "yarn"; they meet on the chest at "measure" and "measure." At "sheep" both hands are stretched forward with fingers widespread.

Second verse. Repeat the motions, in the same rhythm.

Third verse. Bend forward, stretching the hands down toward the floor, reaching the lowest point at "barley" and "grain," and straightening to an erect position at "measure" and "measure," with hands meeting on chest.

Fourth verse. Repeat the motions in same rhythm.

Fifth verse. Stretch the hands upward, reaching the highest point on "hummock" and "hill"; and for the last line hold the hands upward, with head tipped backward.

Sixth verse. Repeat the motions in rhythm.

Seventh verse. Swing the arms full length twice from right to left, and on the last line twirl round on the toes.

The Ambitious Apple

ONCE a little apple hung on a tree, on a hill. It tried as hard as it could to grow

big and round and juicy, and to let the sun make it rosy, because it was an ambitious apple. And this was its ambition: to grow so big and juicy and rosy that it would be taken to the great white house at the foot of the hill, and be put on the breakfast table in the dining room, and be eaten by the lovely lady and the two dear little children who lived there. It thought to itself: "I shall appear on the table and I shall give joy, and I shall have joy."

When the wind blew, the little apple swung gently to and fro, and grew. When the rain fell, the little apple drank it all in, and grew. When the sun was bright, the little apple held its cheek happily to the warmth and turned rosier. Because it was an ambitious apple.

But one day, before the little apple had had nearly enough time to grow juicy and big, a Boy came along over the hill, and saw it hanging there. "My, what a nice red apple!" he said. And he took up a stick and

threw it, and knocked the ambitious apple right off the tree!

But, oh, dear, when the boy took a bite of the little apple, he did n't like it a bit! It was hard, and it was sour. You know it had n't had time to get ripe. So the boy just threw it away.

Far away over the top of the hill, rolled the poor little apple, and stopped at last in the grass beside a tiny footpath. Far, far from the white house it lay, with its ambition all spoiled, and its cheek bitten into.

By and by a man came walking over the hill, by the tiny footpath. He saw the red cheek of the little apple, half hidden in the grass, and picked it up. Then he saw that it had been bitten into. "Now I know what I 'll do with you," he said, and he walked across the field to the pasture where a gentle Gummy Cow was standing, chewing her cud. He put the little apple under Gummy Cow's nose, and she munched it up in no time; it was n't too sour for her.

The little red apple went right down into Gummy Cow's milk factory, and got made into the most delicious milk. And that evening the farm man came and milked Gummy, and filled a pail with the milk, and the little red apple was a part of it!

Then the man carried the milk down the hill, to the big white house, and the cook put it in a cool room for the night.

And next morning, the little red apple, all turned into creamy milk, was put in a blue pitcher, and brought into the dining room. And the lovely lady and the two beautiful children drank it all up! And as they drank, they said, "Oh, how good the milk is! It never was better!"

And the ambitious little apple was content, for its ambition was fulfilled.

Rosey Posey

Rosey Posey gets up at eight,
Goes to school and never is late;

Rosey Posey dines at one, —
When her lessons and sums are done.

Rosey Posey at five has her tea,
Dolls and kittens invited free,

Rosey Posey plays at six, —
Builds a beautiful house of bricks,

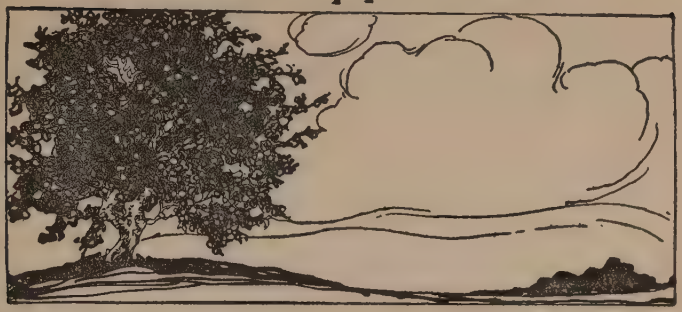
Rosey Posey at seven o'clock
Takes off pinafore, shoe and sock;

Eight by the clock she 's tuck'd up cozy, —
End of the day for Rosey Posey![1]

Children like this, with music, to use for a pantomime game. They act it out as the mother or teacher sings the verse.

[1] From the collection of children's songs, *Pillow-Land*, by Clifton Bingham, published by the Boston Music Company, Boston, Massachusetts, and used by permission.

The old Apple Tree



THERE was once an apple orchard on an old farm. For many years the soil was not plowed, and the trees were not cared for. The orchard grew older and poorer, till at last it was all worthless sprouts, broken trunks and worm-eaten foliage. The few apples were hard and sour.

But there was one of the trees that never stopped trying. It stood close by the old gate, and its good branches hung over the tumble-down wall. There were not many of these good branches; half the trunk was split off by lightning, and the whole top of the other side was dead of drought. But towards the bottom there were

still two or three limbs with a little life in them, and they tried, year after year, to put forth apples as they had done in happier times.

The Tree could not be content to be useless. It remembered the time when its juicy, glowing fruit was the finest on the farm. Before the gathering time, the little children used to sit in its shade and eat the windfalls, and always the Tree heard them say, "Oh, what a good apple! These are the best of all!"

It dreamed of this through all the neglected years, and every summer it tried with its failing strength to put out the same fruit, so that men might eat and praise it. But no one came that way any more, — only once in a while a few boys, playing hare and hounds, or a berry-picker with her pail. And these seldom tried a bite from the desolate looking orchard. If they did, it was only to throw the apples away with a twisted mouth for their sourness.

The old Tree was very sad. But it could not stop trying; it felt that it must try till it died. Each year of hard, dry soil and tearing storm took a little of its life away. And finally a spring came that the Tree felt must be its last. But with the feeling came a new, stronger longing, once more to put out good fruit, once more to feed some one, and to be praised.

The Tree tried as never before; it drew up all the scanty moisture from the earth, and turned eagerly to the warm sun. Its whole heart burned with a desire to put forth fruit, — good fruit. Little by little, apples formed on the one best branch. Little by little, they swelled and softened and reddened. No other branch bore; the tree was almost dead. But when the crisp autumn weather came, that one single branch of ripe apples stood out like a flag.

The old Tree was very tired. "I wish I might know they are good," it thought.

"But it is something to have had them. I have tried."

One glorious October day, a gentleman came wandering through the fields of the old farm, with his hunting dog. Presently he turned aside into the old orchard. The dog ran all about, sniffing and wagging his tail.

The gentleman took off his hat and cooled his forehead in the wind. "A pretty day, Snipe," he said to the dog. Snipe pricked his ears for answer. "It is a pity these trees have run out," the gentleman said, "a good apple would taste just right to me now."

At that moment he saw the gleam of red from the old Tree. He pushed his way through the tangle, till he came close to the old gate, and saw the one branch, full of red apples. "H'm," he said, "those really look as if they might be eatable; I wonder?"

As he spoke, he picked one of the apples, and bit into it, carefully, not wanting to get a sour mouthful.

"Well, well!" he said, "it is really good!" and he began to eat it. As he ate, he liked it still better, and presently he called Snipe, and found himself a comfortable seat on the moss beneath the tree. Snipe stretched himself by his master's side, his head close to his knee. And the master ate his apple slowly, contentedly, raising his kind face to the soft sky, and letting a spicy wind play over his head.

When the apple was gone, the gentleman picked another, choosing this time with great care. This, too, he ate, with much relish. "It is very good, Snipe," he said. "It's a pity you don't care for fruit!"

By and by he finished the second apple, and sitting there in the warm sunshine, he began to think out loud. The old Tree heard every word. He said: "Old Tree, you have taught me a lesson. You have taught me that no one is so poor or old or unfortunate but that he may bear good fruit. Everything in the world may give its

share of service and usefulness. I thank you!"

The old Tree trembled with joy through all its drying leaves. A great stillness came into its heart; a great peace. It had given good fruit to be eaten; it had been appreciated, it had taught a wise man more wisdom. What more could life give? Whether it should see another spring or not no longer mattered. The Tree was content.

Wha lairn't you to Dance

WHA lairn't you to dance,
You to dance, you to dance,
Wha lairn't you to dance?
Bobbety Bruce de Brawley!

Mither lairn't me to dance,
Me to dance, me to dance,
Mither lairn't me to dance,
Bobbety Bruce de Brawley!

Wha lairn't you to bow,
You to bow, you to bow,

Wha lairn't you to bow?
Bobbety Bruce de Brawley!

Mither lairn't me to bow,
Me to bow, me to bow,
Mither lairn't me to bow,
Bobbety Bruce de Brawley!

Wha lairn't you to rin,
You to rin, you to rin,
Wha lairn't you to rin?
Bobbety Bruce de Brawley!

Mither lairn't me to rin,
Me to rin, me to rin,
Mither lairn't me to rin,
Bobbety Bruce de Brawley!

The children, singly or in a circle, move forward with rhythmic steps and gestures for three lines of each verse. On the fourth line they make a deep curtsy.

The first two verses are the original fragment. I have added the others, to fill out the game according to what seems the early intention.

The Foolish Chauffeur

One day the new chauffeur took the car out of the garage and drove it to the lady's door, and the lady and her children got in. The chauffeur said, —

"The car is in very bad shape, Madam."

"Oh," said the lady, "I am very sorry to hear that! It seemed all right when Mr. Brown drove it last week. What is the matter, Hutchins?"

"The hengine 's in very bad shape. It will need a complete hover'aulin'," said the chauffeur.

The lady was distressed to hear that anything was wrong with the engine, for she did not want anything to happen to their

beautiful car, which they enjoyed so much, but she closed the door and said, —

"We will go to the farm, please."

The chauffeur started the engine, and it said, —

"Spit, bang, pouf!"

Then it said, short and puffily, —

"I 'll do my *best*, — I 'll do my *best*."

As they got out on the smooth road, the engine said, —

"Clankety, clankety, clankety, clankety, — — — —"

"Why, Hutchins, how bad it sounds," said the lady. "It sounds almost as if the engine were dry. Did you put in plenty of oil?"

"Yes, Madam," said the chauffeur, "I filled it hup just before starting."

The lady felt sad to hear the engine go "Clankety, clankety, clankety," and the children felt sad too. They were very fond

of the car, which gave them such good times, and they knew father had paid a great deal of money for it.

Pretty soon they came to a slight hill on the road to the farm, fifteen miles away. It was not the worst hill on the way, and usually the car hummed and skimmed up it, like a big bird. But this time the engine began to puff like a fat old man, before they were half way up. The children thought it said, —

"Afraid-I-can't, Afraid-I-can't, Afraid-I-can't,"

and then it almost stopped, and it gasped out, —

"Can't-*do-it*, Can't-*do-it!*"

The chauffeur jammed the shift into low speed, with a very cross look, and the engine caught its breath, and said, —

"Hard going, hard going!
That-is-better. That-is-better.
— —"

At last they managed to creep over the top of the hill, and the poor engine began to grind out again, —

"Clankety, clankety, clankety."

"This car never made trouble on a hill before," said the lady. "Hutchins, are you sure you filled the oil tank?"

"Certainly, Madam," said the chauffeur.

"Are the grease cups full?" said the lady.

"*Certainly*, Madam," said the chauffeur, and he seemed so much annoyed that the lady did not like to say any more.

Such a time as they had going to the farm! On every hill the engine coughed and sputtered and said, —

"'Fraid I can't, 'Fraid I can't,"

and then it would almost stop and gasp out,—

"I can't *do* it."

The chauffeur grew crosser and crosser; he jammed the shift into low speed, and he

looked as if he would like to break it, and then he said, — "The 'ole car needs hover-'aulin', Madam."

(The lady thought he said "old" car, but it was just his way of saying "whole.")

Then they would crawl, and jolt, and jerk over the top of the hill, and the engine would grumble and complain all along the smooth road, —

"Clankety, clankety, clankety."

It grew worse on every hill all along the way, until at last it seemed as if they could not even crawl up the little incline of the farm driveway. The engine choked, and sputtered, and gasped, and finally stopped dead just at the barn door.

"Shall I take the car to the garage in the village, Madam, and 'ave the hengine taken down?" said the chauffeur. "You 'll not be able to get 'ome in 'er."

The lady thought a moment, and then she said, —

"No, Hutchins, you need not take the car just now. I want to think it over a little. I am going to let you go back to the city by train. Leave the car here, and if I need you, I will telephone for you."

"Very well, Madam," said the chauffeur, and he went off to the train.

Then the lady called John, the man about the farm, and she said, "John, I would like to look at that oil tank; the engine sounds *dry* to me."

"Yes 'm," said John, and he opened the hood, and unscrewed the cap, and peered in. "I cannot see very well," he said; "it does not seem to be very high."

"Take the gallon can of Mobiloil and put some in, please," said Mrs. Brown; so John got the gallon can and poured oil into the oil tank. He poured, and he poured, and he *poured* every drop of that gallon into the tank!

"Why, John," said the lady, "a gallon is all it holds when it is perfectly empty

It must have been absolutely dry! No wonder the poor engine said 'Clankety, clankety.' Maybe there is not so very much the matter with the engine after all. Suppose you take your oiler and oil all the places that might need it."

So John took his oiler and oiled every single place that had a place for oil.

"Now fill the radiator, please, for it has been smoking all the way."

So John put fresh water in the radiator.

"Now, John," said the lady, "you start her, and I will take the wheel. We will drive very gently out of the yard and along the road. I want to see for myself what is really the matter."

So John started the engine. It did not say, —

"Spit, bang, pouf"

this time. It just said, rather hoarsely, —

"Now!"

And as the lady drove very gently down the driveway, it began to grumble, —

"I was so dry, I was so dry!"

Then, as they came to the smooth ground, it said, —

"Feeling better, feeling better,
better — better — better — better —
better — better — better — better —
better."

Pretty soon they came to a little hill. The children listened anxiously to hear, "'Fraid I can't," but instead it said, —

"Let me get her, let me get her,
let me get her, lemme getter,
lemme getter, lemme getter,"

and as they went over the top of the hill, it said, —

"I got it, I got it,
I got it, I got it."

Down the hill they went, and when they reached the level road, the car began to sing; it sang the pretty song it always sang when

father drove, — the song of the Contented Automobile. It sang: —

"Hum-hum-m-m-m-m!"

The lady smiled happily and the children laughed for joy. Their beautiful car was not in "bad shape," and father would not have to be disappointed when he came home.

And what do you think they did to the foolish chauffeur who drove a car fifteen miles without any lubricating oil in its tank? The lady said she thought a chauffeur foolish enough to do that was too foolish to have a car to drive, so she wrote Hutchins a letter and told him he could not be their chauffeur any more, and that she would drive the car home herself.

I think the Automobile was glad.

Was ye at the fair

Was ye at the fair?
Saw ye mony people?
Saw ye oor guid man,
Ridin' on the beetle?[1]
Wasna he a fule,
Didna he buy a saiddle?
Wearin' a' his old breeks,
Ridin' on a beetle!

In singing or saying this rhyme, the hands are kept on the hips, and all motion is with the feet.

[1] A "beetle" is a rolling-pin.

LITTLE BETTY BAKER

A NONSENSE STORY

THERE was once a little girl named Betty Baker. She was very fond of baking things, and when her mother went to work, she always tried to surprise her with something nice for supper. One day in every week her mother left her to get the supper. When she went out in the morning she used to say to Betty, —

"Now, Betty Baker, there's cold meat and sauce in the pantry; set the table and have the kettle boiling for my tea when I

come home. You won't have to cook anything."

But Betty Baker always cooked something.

One day when her mother went away in the morning, she said, "I've mixed the bread dough ready to rise. Keep a little fire, and set the dough on the back of the stove to rise."

"Yes, Mother," said Betty.

As soon as her mother had gone, Betty Baker put on coal and opened all the drafts, and made a hot, hot fire, and put the dough on the front of the stove, to rise.

It rose, and it rose, and it rose, and it bubbled, and it ran over, all down the sides of the bowl, all over the top of the hot stove, and then it began to burn! After a while the bowl broke, and all the dough ran over the stove, and burned to a crisp.

When Betty Baker's mother came into the house, she began to sniff. "My patience,

Betty Baker," she said, "What have you got on the stove?"

"I 'm raising the bread, Mother," said Betty Baker."

"You are raising a smell!" said Mother Baker, and when she saw the dough on the top of the stove, she said, "Dear, dear, Betty, that 's no way to raise bread! You have to raise bread cool and slow. Do you hear me? — cool and slow!"

"Yes, Mother, said Betty Baker.

Next week when Mother Baker went to work, she said, "Now, Betty, I have mixed dough, and it 's risen most enough to bake; when I come home I 'll bake it."

As soon as she had gone, little Betty Baker said to herself, "I 'll bake the bread." So she put the dough in the pan, and put the pan in the oven, and shut down all the drafts, and opened the oven door a little way, to make the fire cool and slow. She baked it cool and slow, and she baked it cool and slow, all day long.

When her mother came home, Betty took the bread out of the pan and put it on the table. Her mother looked at it, and then she poked it with a fork, and she said, "What in all the world is this, Betty?"

"A loaf of bread, Mother," said Betty.

"A loaf of bread?" said her mother. "It's just nothing but dough, Betty Baker, and soured dough, too! Don't you know that is n't the way to bake bread? Bread has to be brown and crusty; you hear me, Betty? — brown and crusty!"

"Yes, Mother," said Betty.

Next week when her mother went out, Betty Baker thought she would make a custard to surprise her. So she beat the eggs and the milk and sugar, and put the mixture in little custard cups, and set them in the oven to bake. And she made a nice fire, and every once in a while she looked at the custards to see if they were brown and crusty. They got brown pretty quick, but they did not seem to get very crusty. So

she baked them, and she baked them, and she baked them. And by and by Mother Baker came home.

Betty Baker took the custards out of the oven and put them on the table. They were just little brown lumps in the bottom of the cups. Mother Baker smelled of them, and she felt them with a spoon, and then she said, "Will you please tell me, Betty Baker, what it is you have made this time?"

"Custards, Mother," said Betty Baker.

"Custards!" said her mother, "Do you call that custard? That is n't custard; that is just a mess! Custard should be soft and yellow, and shake when you move it!"

"Oh," said Betty Baker.

Next week when the mother went to work, Betty Baker looked in the cook-book, and decided she would make Boston Favorite Cake, to surprise her mother. So she mixed the flour and the sugar and the eggs and the milk, and put it in a pan and set it in

the oven. It was nice and soft and yellow, and she moved it very often to be sure it shook. And she kept the door open so it should n't get brown.

When her mother came home, Betty put the Boston Favorite Cake on the table. Mother Baker looked at it, but she did not poke it with a spoon; she just said, "Is this custard again, Betty?"

"No, Mother," said Betty Baker, "It' s cake."

"Cake!" said her mother. "My patience to goodness, have n't you any judgment at all, Betty? Don't you know that cake has to be firm? It has to be firm, but not too firm, and soft, but not too soft. This is n't cake at all!"

"But how can I tell when it is firm but not too firm, and soft but not too soft?" said Betty.

"Try it with a straw," said Mother Baker. "If it sticks to the straw, it is n't done; if the straw comes out clean, it is done."

"Oh," said Betty.

Next week when her mother went to work, Betty thought she would make molasses candy, to surprise her. So she put the molasses and the butter and the sugar in a pan, and put it on the stove to boil. And she boiled it, and she boiled it, and she boiled it, and every once in a while she tried it with a straw to see if it was done. But it always stuck to the straw. So she kept on boiling it until her mother came home.

When her mother came in the door, there was a terrible black smudge of smoke in the house. "My patience, Betty," said her mother, "What have you got on that stove?"

"Molasses candy, Mother," said Betty.

Her mother ran to the kitchen and took off the candy kettle, which was burned to a cinder, and then she said, "Betty Baker, you just haven't got any judgment at all, and the next time I go to work, you keep away from the stove. Don't you go near it!"

"All right, Mother," said Betty Baker.

The next week when Mother Baker went to work, she left beans and brown bread in the oven to bake, and a nice hot fire to bake them with.

Pretty soon the baker's boy came in at the kitchen door, and left the door open. In came a little gust of wind, and blew a piece of brown paper on top of the hot stove. The brown paper curled up a little, smoked a little, and began to burn. The wind blew harder, and the paper burned brighter.

But Betty Baker did n't go near the stove.

Pretty soon the brown paper burned so high that it set fire to the dish-wiper hanging behind the stove. The dish-wiper burned up with quite a flame.

But Betty Baker did n't go near the stove.

By and by the dish-wiper set fire to the paper trimming on the edge of the shelf, and it burned, and it burned, and it set fire to the shelf.

But Betty Baker did n't go near the stove.

When Mother Baker came home, she smelled smoke as soon as she got inside the door. She ran to the kitchen, and there was all one side of the kitchen on fire! "My goodness, Betty," she said, "what have you been doing?"

"I did n't touch the stove, Mother," said Betty Baker.

Betty Baker's mother ran for the neighbors, and everybody poured on water, and by and by they put the fire out.

After it was all out, Mother Baker said to Betty, "Betty Baker, it looks as if you just never will have any judgment. Everything I tell you to do, you do when you ought not to, and everything I tell you not to do, you don't do when you ought to! And I guess until you learn judgment I will have to take you with me when I go to work."

So that was the end of Betty Baker's baking. — But the children made a foolish

rhyme about her, and they used to tease her by singing: —

"Little Betty Baker,
Her mother was a shaker,
But the more she shook her,
The more her wits forsook her!"

Which was all nonsense, you know, for Betty Baker's mother did n't shake her at all.

We'll All Awa' to Jessie's Hoose

We 'll all awa' to Jessie's hoose,
To Jessie's hoose, to Jessie's hoose,
We'll all awa' to Jessie's hoose,
To get a cup o' tea!

Your plack and my plack,
Your plack and my plack,
Your plack and my plack,
And Jessie's bawbee!

We'll all awa' to Johnnie's hoose,
To Johnnie's hoose, to Johnnie's hoose,
We 'll all awa' to Johnnie's hoose,
To get a cup o' tea!

Your plack and my plack,
Your plack and my plack,
Your plack and my plack,
And Johnnie's bawbee!

Make as many verses as there are children, naming each in turn. The real old Scotch way is to move the feet and hands in time, taking any little dancing or balancing step that fits the rhythm, and either clapping the hands lightly or making appropriate gestures.

Happy Easter

In the night before Easter, the little Easter Rabbit comes out of the woods with a great basket on his back and another over his arm, filled with Easter eggs.

Stepping softly on his velvety feet, he comes into the town and into the house. All the little children are asleep. Softly, softly, into the playroom he goes, and there he

hides some of the eggs. Then he slips into the front rooms and there he hides more, everywhere where you would n't think of looking; — under the sofa cushions, in the flower pots, in grandma's work-basket.

But if there is a garden by the house, he passes straight through, out of the back door, down the steps, softly, so softly, into the garden. And there he hides the most. Under the old stone wall, in the crotch of the lilac tree, in a bird's nest in the hedge, — every little tuck-a-way corner the cunning Easter Rabbit finds and hides an egg in.

Some are little white and pink and green eggs, made of sugar candy; some are great chocolate eggs, with fancy trimmings; some are made of maple sugar, oh, so good!

Last of all, he hides a basket of fresh eggs, ready to cook for breakfast. Each one is colored with pretty colors, or has a little picture on it, or else a child's name. One has "E" on it for "Elizabeth," and one

has "J" on it for "James." (Change these initials to suit your little audience.)

When the Easter Rabbit has hidden all the eggs for the children in that house, he cocks up his long ears, waves his little tail, and is off, still as the night.

In the morning the children come shining from their rooms, to say "Happy Easter!" to father and mother. "Happy Easter!" "Happy Easter!" you hear all over the house. Out into the garden they run and the great Easter Egg Hunt begins.

Such shouts, when a child finds an egg! Sometimes two or three are hidden together. Sometimes great excitement is heard, and then you know that Jackie found a chocolate egg. But the greatest fun of all is hunting for the basket of fresh eggs, for cook will not begin to get breakfast until that basket is brought to her. The child who finds it has as a prize the right to choose the prettiest egg for his

own, and he carries the basket carefully into the kitchen, followed by all the others.

Then comes the happy breakfast with everybody's boiled egg coming out different from everybody else's and prettier! Some are rose-colored, and one has a wreath of blue forget-me-nots on it, and one has a little picture of birds in a nest. Mary's has "Mary" written in red and blue with a rose beside the "M." Mother's has a little dove of grey and white and Daddy's has a yellow chicken, looking most surprised.

After breakfast everyone puts his treasures in a pretty basket and saves them to show visitors and to share with friends.

After church, the door-bell begins ringing, and always it is an Easter gift for some one in the family, or a caller to wish them a happy Easter. It is a lovely, sweet-hearted, thankful day, full of picnics and visits, and excursions for flowers. And when the children go to bed at night, they

say, "Good night, dear little Easter Rabbit. Thank you. Please come again next year!"

Way off in the woods the little Easter Rabbit hears the leaves rustle on the trees, and he listens with his long sharp ears, and the leaves whisper softly: "The children are saying 'Good night, dear little Easter Rabbit! Thank you.'"

Then the little Easter Rabbit laughs to himself for joy, and the little leaves laugh too. And Happy Easter is over.

TIRED CHILD

Translated from Luise Hensel's "Müde bin Ich"

TIRED eyes and heavy head,
I 'll lay me in my little bed.
Heavenly Father's eyes will keep
Watch above me while I sleep.

If I have done wrong to-day
Father, wash the fault away!
Thy dear love and Jesus' blood,
Can make all thy children good.

Keep my dear ones safe from harm,
Let them rest within thy arm,
Keep the whole world, great and small,
Heavenly Father, bless them all!

Gently close the eyes that weep,
Aching hearts put fast asleep,
Let the moon in heaven stand
Guard above the silent land.

The wandering child

Adapted and simplified for little children, from the parable of "The Wandering Child" by Harriet Martineau, originally published in the "Monthly Repository," a magazine of the last century in England.

ONCE a child was all by himself in a still place among the groves. He thought he was alone, for he did not see his Father's eyes watching over him from the thicket. But the Father was there.

The child was very happy. He ran and played in the long grass, picked the flowers,

wandered among the great trees, and sang till the woods rang with his voice.

Because everything was new to him he was afraid of nothing. When he lay among the flowers, a dangerous serpent rose from the midst of them. The child saw how bright its coat was, like a rainbow, and he stretched out his hand to take it. Then the Father called from the thicket, "Beware!" And the child sprang up, and the serpent crept away.

But the child forgot the voice, for he saw nothing.

Soon, a lovely butterfly broke from its chrysalis and fluttered away on the wind. The child ran after it, till the butterfly rose and was lost to his sight. Then the Father put forth his hand and pointed to the clouds of the sky, where the butterfly's flight ended.

But the child did not notice the hand.

There was a clear spring in the midst of the trees, and its waters flowed into a

pool, quiet and deep. The child knelt at the edge and saw his own smiling face reflected in the water. It pleased him, and he bent nearer.

"Beware!" the voice said again.

The child looked about him, but as a breeze was rippling the pool, he thought it had been only the voice of the wind, so he played on, and when the sun danced on the ruffled water, he laughed and put one foot into the waves, to feel their coolness.

"Beware!" said the voice once more, and this time it was louder.

But the child was full of play, and he did not listen.

At last he saw something glittering at the bottom of the pool. He wanted it so much that he reached for it, leaned for it, and then plunged after it. Alas, the pool was deep! He sank, and as he sank, he called aloud for help, help!

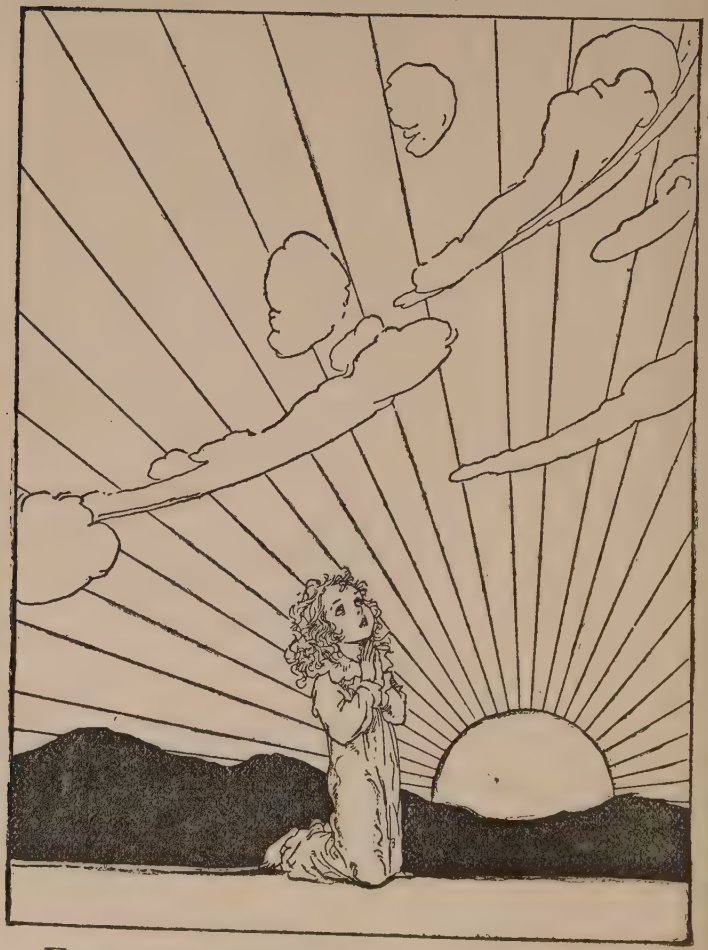
Instantly the Father was there, and his strong hand drew the child to safety before

the waters closed over his head. And while the child shook with fear and cold, the Father comforted him, and said, —

"I was watching over you, but you did not know; I gave you a sign, and you did not see; I spoke, and you did not listen; if you had been thinking of me, you would have known I was near."

And then the child threw himself in the Father's arms, and said, — "Father stay near me forever! And my eyes shall be always watching for your sign, and my ears waiting to hear your voice!"

Morning Prayer of Thanks



For food and clothes and sleeping beds
We bow our grateful little heads:

For love, and lessons, and for play,
We fold our hands our thanks to say;
For sun and wind and sea and sky
We sing thy praise, dear God on high.

Give us, we pray, thy spirit too,
Living in all we say or do,
So that our works like thine may be
Beautiful eternally.

The Resurrection Plant

Long, long ago, when Jesus was a little baby, there was a cruel king in his country, named Herod. Herod had heard that one of the Prophets had said a new king was to be born that year, and he was afraid of losing his throne. So he did a terribly wicked thing. He sent soldiers throughout the country of Judea, to seize and kill every Jewish boy baby born that year.

Jesus' mother, Mary, and Joseph, her husband, were warned of the horrible thing that was to happen. And in the dark night they wrapped the baby up and fled away out of Judea. Far, far away they traveled, into Egypt; Mary rode on a donkey with

Jesus in her arms, and Joseph walked beside them. They were weary, and afraid, and often they were hungry and thirsty. But they were so thankful to have got out of Judea without being caught by the soldiers that they did not mind the heat or the hard roads or the leaving behind all their possessions.

Day after day they rode slowly along, for Mary was weak, and it was hard traveling for her. But always she smiled at the baby in her arms, and spoke gently to Joseph, so that the way seemed easier to him. Sometimes they met other poor people journeying, and sometimes they were passed on the road by rich travelers with great trains of camels and drivers. Mary's beautiful smile and kind mother eyes pleased every one, and many times people gave her little gifts of corn or milk, or dates. And Mary was gentle to all creatures.

One day they were alone in the great desert. The sun scorched hot, and dry on

the glittering sand, and Mary was faint with thirst. But she could not drink much for there was but little water left in their jars, and she must save it for the baby. So she took but little in her cup.

Wearily she sat, her head bowed. As she looked down, she noticed a small plant growing on the hot ground. So dry it was that its fern-like leaves were curled to a tight hard bunch, brown and dry. It seemed quite dead.

"Poor little plant," said Mary. "You, too, thirst in a weary land. Would I could give you water for your need." And as she spoke she touched its leaves gently.

Oh, what was happening to the little plant? Slowly, surely, its dry curled leaves began to unfold! Slowly, surely, they turned from dead brown to living green! The little plant was coming alive. Holiness and kindness had touched it, and it could never die again, for holiness and kindness live forever.

And from that day to this, the strange little plant never dies; its leaves curl up brown and dry, and it becomes just a bunch of prickly moss, and so it stays for months and years. Travelers to that far eastern country often bring these little bunches home in their trunks. But just put the little dry bunch in a bowl of water, and see what happens! Way down at its heart the living memory of the water of kindness is stirred, and the little plant begins to wake. Slowly its leaves uncurl, and spread, and turn green, and at last it is a beautiful fern, living and growing in the water.

So people call it the resurrection plant, or the "semper viva," which is Latin for "ever living."

This is only a legend, you know, but one part of it is surely true, and that is that goodness and mercy are everlasting: they cannot die. And the little resurrection plant reminds us of that.

THE WASSAIL SONG

Old Christmas Carol

HERE we come a-wassailing,
Among the leaves so green,
Here we come a-wandering,
So fair to be seen.

Chorus

Love and joy come to you,
And to you your wassail too,
And God bless you, and send you
A happy new year,
And God send you a happy new year.

We are not daily beggars
That beg from door to door,
But we are neighbors' children
Whom you have seen before.
Chorus.

Good Master and good Mistress,
As you sit by the fire,
Pray think of us poor children
Who are wandering in the mire.
Chorus.

We have a little purse
Made of ratching leather skin;
We want some of your small change
To line it well within.
Chorus.

Bring us out a table,
And spread it with a cloth;
Bring us out a mouldy cheese,
And some of your Christmas loaf.
Chorus.

God bless the master of this house,
Likewise the mistress too;
And all the little children
That round the table go.

Chorus.

The Christmas Tree that lived

WHEN Betty Darling was one year old her father bought a farm. So it happened that Betty spent her second Christmas in the country.

On Christmas morning as soon as Betty had eaten her orange juice and cereal, Nurse dressed her in whitest white, and tied her yellow curls in a big bow that looked like a butterfly perching on her head; then she took her to the head of the stairs and blew

a little silver whistle that Father Darling had given her the evening before.

Instantly came a gay chord from the piano downstairs; the living-room door flew open and Daddy Darling came leaping up the stairs. "Merry Christmas, father's sweetheart," he said to Betty, and taking her on his shoulder he marched downstairs, stepping in time to the lovely Christmas music Mother was playing.

In at the open door they went, Nursie following, in step. And then everybody was calling, "Merry Christmas, dearest; merry Christmas, honey-heart." But Mother said, "Merry Christmas, Beloved," because that was her name for Betty. And Betty said, "Merry Crippy" to them all in her sweet little voice. There was Grandma and Grandpa and Uncle Ran and Mary, the cook, and Janie who waited on table, besides Mother and Father and Nursie. *And* there was a big, shining glorious Christmas tree beside the piano.

It had chains and balls and stars and candles on it, a big paper Santa Claus at the top, and dozens of gifts for every one. It was lovely. Betty looked at it and laughed for joy. But when she had looked a while Mother said softly, "Look over there, Beloved," and turned her round to face the windows.

There, on a low table between the sunny windows, with firelight and sunlight and frostlight all shining on it, stood Betty's very own Christmas tree; just her owntydonty-nobody-else's Christmas tree. It was only two feet tall and it had a top like a pointing finger, with little branches coming out from the stem most beautifully even and pointed, so brave and green! On its top a lovely birdie with a glittering tail swayed lightly; from the tiny twigs hung wee frosty lanterns of spun glass, rose and blue and scarlet balls with the light shining through, a Santa Claus no bigger than Betty's hand, and wonderful ropes of gilt and silver tinsel.

It was so little that Betty could reach every single thing. She could see it from top to bottom and on every side. She loved it because it was so little, and because it was all her own. She sat in her high-chair holding a new dolly in her arms, and looked at her tree and talked to it. She touched the trimmings with finger-tips as soft as a birdie's wing, but she never pulled or broke or hurt anything on it.

That was a wonderful Christmas for Betty. They sang songs, and told stories for her; she played with many new toys; she went riding in a slippy-sleigh behind old Molly with Father and Mother; and when the first silver star shone on the white snow, and the red firelight made the little tree all rosy, she helped give gifts from the bigger tree to all the little boys and girls whose fathers worked on the farm.

But of all the wonderful and lovely things Betty loved her Christmas tree best. And every morning until New Year's Day, as

soon as she was brought downstairs, she ran first to see if the little tree was still there between the windows. "Pretty Crippy, pretty Crippy," she would say, touching its pointed branches softly, and sometimes she would kiss it.

New Year's Day was very warm and mild, and soon after breakfast Daddy Darling said to Mother, "I think we can plant Betty's Christmas tree to-day. Tell Nurse to put on her leggings and fur coat, and she shall come too." So down Betty was brought, all wrapped up, and there was Daddy Darling and Mother Darling and Ben, who looked after everything, all standing round her little Christmas tree.

"Sweetheart," said Father, "would you like to have your Crippy tree all planted in the ground, so that it will never dry up, and die, but will keep always green and shiny for you?"

Betty's big, black eyes looked at the Crippy tree and looked at Dada, and be-

cause all the things that Dada did were always nice, she nodded her head for "yes."

Then Ben and Father took the little tree and the big tub it stood in, out of the door and along the snowy path, up the hill. And Mother and Nursie each took a hand of Betty and followed after. When they had gone a little way they came to a place where the snow was rounded up like a little tent. Father set the tub on the ground, and Ben brushed away the snow, and there was a heap of dry leaves and pine boughs. These, too, he took away, and underneath was a deep hole, plenty big enough to hold tub and tree, too; and the ground was n't frozen at all because the leaves and boughs had been over it. But they did n't put the tub in the hole; very gently and carefully with small shovels they lifted the earth and the little tree out of the tub, and set it all just as it was, in the hole. Then Ben brought a basket of soft earth from the barn, and filled in all the chinks, and they stamped it down

until the little Christmas tree looked as if it had always stood there. Last of all they put the leaves and pine boughs around its stem, to protect it.

"Now your Crippy tree will last for every Christmas if nothing happens to it," said Father Darling, and Betty was delighted.

It happened that Daddy Darling's work took him very far away, afterwards, and Betty never spent another Christmas at the farm until she was twelve years old. That year they all came back to spend the holidays at the dear old place.

On Christmas morning Betty's father, just for fun and in memory of that other Christmas, blew a little silver whistle, and big twelve-year old Betty came running down the stairs.

The living-room had a beautiful great tree in it, and lovely gifts for everybody, but there was no dear little tiny tree on the low table between the south windows. Every year of her life till now Betty had had

her own little tree, each year a bigger one, and now she was rather surprised not to find one.

But Mother Darling said very quickly, "You have a tree, Beloved, but we can't show it to you till we go out of doors."

"Out of doors?" said Betty. Then suddenly she thought what Mother meant. "Why, Mother," she said, "you don't mean that my first little 'Crippy tree' has lived all this time?"

"My dearest," said Father, "your first little 'Crippy tree' was a Douglas Fir, and unless something happens to it, it will be alive and green when you are lots older than Mother Darling and I are now."

"Oh, Daddy, show it to me!" said Betty eagerly.

So very soon they were all wrapped up again and once more they went following the white path up the hillside.

But where was the little tree? Why, there it was! — Only, it was n't so very little.

It stood far higher than Father Darling's head, straight and green and shiny, with its branches most beautifully even and pointed just as they had been long ago, and its top like a pointing finger still. It was hung all over with the tiniest little cones, all purplish-brown and green, frothing with shining gum. Betty took one look at it and then she put out both hands and touched its little cones as she had touched its trimmings when it stood in the house that first Christmas.

"Oh, I love it!" she said. "It 's my very own Christmas tree."

And then, as if it heard and was grateful, the tree offered her a Christmas gift; a little wind came to sway its branches, and there in the very heart of the bough nearest her reach lay a little bird's nest, frosted with snow, and shining like a jewel. Father Darling took it carefully from its fastening and Betty Darling carried it happily back to the house. And for years it stayed in the old

living-room to welcome her whenever she came.

But far longer and holier was the greeting of the Christmas Tree that lived. For it grew and grew, and was always more beautiful, and it kept Betty's first Christmas at the farm alive in its fragrant heart.

PRETTY COW

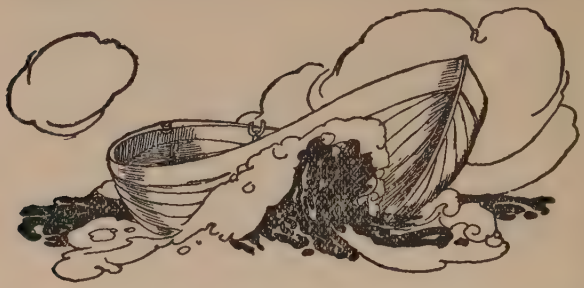
THANK you, pretty cow, that made
Pleasant milk to soak my bread,
Every day and every night,
Warm, and fresh, and sweet, and white.

Do not chew the hemlock rank,
Growing on the weedy bank;
But the yellow cowslips eat,
That will make it very sweet.

Where the purple violet grows,
Where the bubbling water flows,
Where the grass is fresh and fine,
Pretty cow, go there and dine.

ANN TAYLOR

THE ADVENTURE OF THE LITTLE WHITE BOAT



A LITTLE white boat lived by the side of a pine woods, on the blue bay. All summer it was tied with a strong rope to the float, and bobbed up and down on the gentle tide.

One day, Daddy took the children for a row in it and they landed on a small island off shore. While the children looked for shells, Daddy tied the little boat to a stone, and it enjoyed itself playing with the curly waves.

Pretty soon, with a swish and a swash, along came a big motor boat named "If."

"Want to go for a ride?" called its owner to Daddy.

"Yes, indeed," said Daddy, and "Yes,

indeed," said the children. "Yes, indeed," thought the little white boat, too.

So they tied the little boat behind the big boat, and off they flew, with a swish and a swash.

That was a grand ride for the little white boat! Never had it gone so fast or so far. They went the whole length of the bay, to the ocean's mouth and back again, and they passed every boat on the way. Oh, it was fine! "Hurrah for the 'If'!" said the children. "Good for the 'If,'" said Daddy. "How grand the 'If' is!" thought the little rowboat.

By and by they came home to the float, and the little white boat was tied up, and the "If" sailed away, and Daddy and the children went up to the house.

The little rowboat was all alone. It was very excited and happy, and full of thoughts.

"Oh," it thought, "if I could only have another ride like that! If I could only go so

fast! If I had an engine inside of me! If I could go alone, without some one to pull me! If—if—if—" The little rowboat grew tired and dozed off.

It woke up with a bounce and a bob, for the wind had risen and so had the waves. The stars were shining, and the beach was making a whispering sound.

"How bright the sky is," thought the little boat. "I wish I could take a little ride!" "If—" and it began to wonder and think of all the big "ifs," till it grew very restless and eager. It pulled and tugged, and bobbed about, jerking at its rope, and shaking its prow.

All of a sudden the rope broke, and the little white boat was free! It began to move, faster and faster, without anyone pulling it, but with the wind and tide helping it along.

"Now I shall have a ride! Now I shall go by myself!" it thought.

It was so happy, so happy, out in the starlight alone, flying along! Past the pine

woods, past the yacht club, past the gasoline float it went. What an adventure!

Pretty soon the wind blew harder, and puffed some clouds over the sky.

After a while there were no stars left, and the bay was very dark indeed. And the wind blew harder than ever. It blew so hard that the waves splashed all inside of the little white boat, and it bounced and bobbed so much that it began to be tired.

"I think I'd like to go home now," it thought.

But it couldn't turn round. The wind wouldn't let it. On and on it went, rolling and bobbing, in the dark. It grew very lonely and very sorry, and so very very tired! But it had to go on.

After a long long time, the gray dawn came in the sky, and the little white boat could see white foam of waves on the rocks, and hear the noise of breakers. That frightened it dreadfully. All boats are afraid of breakers and surf; they love the clear water.

What should it do if the wind drove it to those rocks?

It put out all its strength to turn round, to swing away from the surf, but in vain. Nearer and nearer the wind and tide swept it along. Now there was a streak of red in the sky where the great sun was ready to rise; the world grew lighter, and the little boat could see the dark rock looming up most plainly ahead of it. Oh, dear, oh, dear, how frightened it was!

"If I were safe at my float again," it thought, "I 'd not take another ride alone. I wish I had n't come!"

But it was no use. In another few minutes the big waves lifted it high up and set it on a side of the rock, just as if a giant had taken it in his hands. Then the wave went back, and the little white boat slid and scraped and fell back with it. It hurt, that horrid scrape along the pretty paint.

Another wave came, and carried the little boat in against the rocks again. This time

it bumped so hard that the little boat cried out, in pain. It cried out as loud as it could, and gave a kind of groany, squeaky whimper as it slid back into the water.

Up on the rocks, behind the first ledge, a Fisherman was fixing his lobster traps. He had got up very early to go after lobsters, but the rough sea had kept him from going out. He heard the little boat's groany, squeaky cry.

"I wonder what that is?" he thought. "Sounds like a dory on the rocks."

And he climbed up to look. He saw the poor little white boat, just being carried in on a high wave.

"Psho!" said the Fisherman. "That little craft 'll have a hole in her if she hits again!"

And, quick as a wink, he jumped down to the ledge, reached out just in time, and caught the little boat by the side, before it crashed into the rock. Then he held it steady while the wave sucked out, and on the next one he pulled it high and dry.

The little white boat was saved, and I can tell you it was glad to be alive.

But later in the morning, when the Fisherman had got it down to his float and tied it up there, it felt pretty homesick. Where were the children and the Daddy, and its own dear pine grove?

Just at that minute there was a swish and a swash, and who should come proudly over the choppy sea but the big motor boat, "If"? And in the "If" were—there was the Daddy of the children! Not the children, of course, in that sea, but the Daddy and the motor boat's owner. Oh, how the little boat wished it had a voice to call with! It swung and danced, to attract their attention. But it did not need to do that. The "If" pointed her nose right in towards the float, and the Daddy looked down and said, "That's it! We've found the little rascal."

Then he saw the big scratch on the paint, and he said, "Lucky it wasn't smashed; you see it has been on the rocks."

The little white boat trembled with joy. While the two men talked with the Fisherman, and paid him for saving the boat, it made little gurgling noises of content and gratitude, to the big "If."

And then Daddy tied the little white boat to the stern of the "If," and with a swish and a swash they rode home again. Over the waves, past the village, past the camps, past the yacht club, home to its own pine grove and its own dear float. And there they tied it with a new rope that could n't break.

And the little white boat said to itself, "I am a very lucky little boat. I have got safe home from my adventure, and I 'll never go riding alone again."

THE TREE

I AM God's tree. I shade you from the burning sun in summer, and give you a cool place to rest or play. I keep off the bitter winds in winter. In the driest weather I keep the moisture in the soil; and in the wettest weather my roots keep the earth from washing away. Without me the ground would be baked dry and soaked wet.

Do not cut my bark, or bind my trunk, or break my branches. If I am attacked by insects, spray me. If wind or storm injure me, have me mended. Feed me with good soil, and do not drain the water away from my roots.

In gratitude, I will give you beauty to look at, purer air to breathe, and comfort and protection both winter and summer. And the birds that live in my branches will sing to you Nature's own song of rejoicing.

The Little Dreamer

A LITTLE boy was dreaming,
Upon his nurse's lap,
That the pins fell out of all the stars,
And the stars fell into his cap.

So, when his dream was over,
What should that little boy do?
Why, he went and looked inside his cap,
And found it was n't true. [1]

[1] From *Poetry for Children*, edited by Samuel Eliot (Houghton Mifflin Company).

The Whimper-Whinies

One day Peter Rabbit woke up in the morning not feeling just right. He was n't very pleasant at breakfast, and he was n't very pleasant at play, and by and by while he was running, he happened to fall down; instead of jumping up and starting again, he began to scream. Mother Rabbit came running to the door, thinking he was badly hurt. She looked him all over and brushed off his jacket, and then she said, —

"Peter, you should n't cry like that for a little bump. Dry your eyes and play with

Mary and Bunny. You have given mother a fright for nothing."

At luncheon, Peter was eating his bowl of broth and bread when Mary leaned over to show him what a nice bite of crust she had taken; she leaned too far, and upset a little of Peter's soup. Instantly Peter began to scream again, "Mary's spilled all my soup! Mary's spilled all my soup! Oh, dear!" You would have thought the soup was drowning him, or that he never expected to have any more. Mother Rabbit came hurrying in from the kitchen, where she was making a dessert, and looked to see what the trouble was. She saw a spot of soup on the table, and that was all.

"Peter," she said, "is all that noise because Mary spilled a little soup? I don't see anything to cry about."

But Peter whined and cried, and did n't get really pleasant all through luncheon. He quite spoiled the nice meal for the other Rabbits.

So it went all the afternoon; the sunshiny Peter had gone far, far away. And the crying and whining seemed to be "catching," like measles; before night, Mary and Bunny had lost their sunny faces, too, and Mother Rabbit felt as if she were in the midst of a thunder shower. The worst came at bed time. Instead of coming happily to get into his comfortable bath and his restful bed, Peter began to whine and whimper, —

"I don't want to go to bed, I want to stay up a little while! Please, mother, oh, mother!"

Now Mother Rabbit was a very kind mother, and she did n't like a bit to punish the little Rabbits, but she knew they would grow up to be perfectly horrid if she let them do things like this; so at last she said in a very stern voice to Peter, —

"Peter, if you do not obey me at once, and without crying, you shall stay at home from the picnic to-morrow."

Peter did stop then, but his face stayed all

whiny and puckery, and his voice still sounded whimpery. When Mother Rabbit tucked him into his bed, she said, —

"Peter dear, if you keep on this way you will be only fit to go to Whimper-Whiny land; I should think you 'd dream of the Whimper-Whinies to-night."

Well, Peter fell fast asleep, and he had a dream. This is what he dreamed. He was walking softly down a long green path in the woods, and all the light around him was greenish, not bright and goldy-flecked like daytime. Pretty soon he came to a round white stone beside the path. He walked past it, and there beside the big white stone stood a queer little creature. He was squatty and thin-legged, something like a frog, and he had the worst looking face! It was all puffed up and red, and his mouth was drawn down at the corners. He had red eyes, and a round red nose, and he looked as if he had cried forever and ever.

While Peter was looking at him he said, in a whiny, squeaky, teary voice, —

"I was waiting for you, Peter; I was sure you would come to be one of us."

"Who are you?" said Peter.

"Oh, I'm one of the Whimper-Whinies," said the little creature, in his creaky, whiny voice; "this is Whimper-Whiny land, you know."

"I don't think I like it," said Peter, doubtfully.

"Well, you 'll have to stay, anyway," said the Whimper-Whiny; "but I guess you will like it, for you are just like us."

"Goodness," thought Peter, "I hope I'm not like you!" But he followed the little Whimper-Whiny along the path.

In a minute they came out into a grassy place among the trees, where the strange greenish light was stronger. Such a sound as there was there! Can you imagine dozens of naughty children all crying at once, and a half dozen pussy cats whining at the

same time? That is what it sounded like. Peter put his hands to his ears, and stood still. Then he saw at the other side of the open place, a circle of little creatures like the Whimper-Whiny. They were back to him, but he could see that they seemed to be rubbing at their eyes, and they were all bending over.

"What are they doing?" he whispered to the Whimper-Whiny, as well as he could, for the noise.

"Oh, just crying a pond," said the Whimper-Whiny.

"Crying a pond!" said Peter, "What do you mean?"

The Whimper-Whiny drew his mouth down still further, as he listened to the screeching and whining. "I said, 'crying a pond,'" he said, crossly; "if you don't understand English I can't help it, can I?"

Just then, the circle of little creatures broke up, and some of them came hopping and running to Peter. They were even

worse than the first. Their eyes were redder, their noses more swelled, and their mouths curled farther down. Peter drew back, but they crowded round him, and pulled him along with them. Then he saw that they had been standing round a little pool of water. "You can help us now, Peter," they said, "we are making a new tear-pond. You see, we cry so much it is a pity to waste the tears, so we make ponds out of them." And at once they began to whine and scream and cry again, bending over so the tears would drop in the pool.

Peter thought they were horrid; he wanted to go home; so he started away on the little path. "Keep right on, for the luncheon house," the Whimper-Whinies called after him. "You 'll have to stay in our land now."

Peter ran on, in the green light, hoping to get out of Whimper-Whiny land. He was hungry, and he wanted to get back where things were cheerful. But at a turn in the

path he saw a big arbor, with tables set with many bowls and glasses, and pitchers that looked like home. That seemed better, and he walked right in and sat down.

But before he could see what was in the pitchers the Whimper-Whinies came running down the path and jumped into the chairs. Then began a pandemonium. All the while that they grabbed the pitchers, and filled their bowls, and reached for bread, — *most* rudely, without a single "please" or "thank you," they kept up a constant whining and whimpering. It was, "You have my milk!" "You have more bread than I!" "I don't *want* that bowl!" and things like that. Peter was dreadfully ashamed of them, and he began to think he should get nothing to eat. But presently they pushed the pitcher to him, and he filled his mug. He put it to his mouth, and started to drink. Ugh, it was sour milk!

"The milk is sour," said Peter to his neighbor.

"Oh, yes, it always is," said the Whimper-Whiny, "we cry so much, you know, it sours everything here; there isn't any sweet milk in Whimper-Whiny land."

"I'm going home!" said Peter, getting off his chair.

"No, you can't," said the Whimper-Whinies, "you must be one of us now!"

Peter was dreadfully frightened. He wanted to get away as fast as he could. So he ran and ran, through the woods, putting his fingers in his ears to shut out the crying of the Whimper-Whinies.

Suddenly he stubbed his toe, and fell flat on the ground, — and the thump woke him up, out of his dream!

He was in his own cozy bed, in the nice goldy light of morning, and Mother Rabbit was just opening his door to say "Good morning."

Peter sat up and threw his arms round her neck. "Oh, mother, dear," he said, "don't let the Whimper-Whinies get me!"

Mother Rabbit began to laugh. "I guess you did dream of the Whimper-Whinies," she said.

"I don't want to go to Whimper-Whiny land, mother," said Peter.

"I should say not," said mother, "and I don't wan't you to. Let's have a sunny face and a brave heart to-day, and never a whimper or a whine!"

"Yes, let's!" said Peter, and he jumped out of bed, and dressed himself quickly.

And all that day he took very good care not to act like a Whimper-Whiny, for he did not like their ways at all.

Sun's Greeting

EARLY in the morning the little girl comes into the nursery, washed and combed and dressed, and sits down at her little table to wait for breakfast. The great golden Sun looks in at the window and sees her there. He touches her cheek, brightly, and shines in her face and makes her laugh. Then the great Sun laughs too, and says, —

"How do you do? How do you do?
I send my rays to shine on you
And warm your body through and through."

He touches the little feet and says, —

"Be firm and light and merry and fast,
To run and rest while the day shall last."

He touches the little hands and says, —

"Clean and quiet and willing and strong,
Work and play the whole day long."

And he touches the little head and says, —

"Golden thoughts I bring to you,
Kind and happy and pure and true."

Last, he touches the little heart, gently, oh, so gently, and says, —

"God give this little heart the light
That shines forever, day and night,
The warmth that lives when days are cold,
And little girls are growing old."

PETER'S VISIT TO MOTHER SUN'S HOUSE

ONCE when Peter was sound asleep in his bed, he dreamed. He was standing on the grassy hillside, among the bayberry bushes and wild roses, looking off at the far islands, when a little rosy balloon came floating toward him. It came softly on the wind till it was quite near, and Peter saw a little door on it. He knew it must be a magic balloon by that, because real balloons have no doors. So he stepped in.

As soon as he was inside, the little balloon grew large, large, like a great house, and he saw that all its sides were windows, with cloudy curtains at the sides, and rose-colored cushioned seats beneath. So of course he went and sat on one of the seats, and began to look out. The big balloon was floating up and out, over the sea, up to the clouds. Fast it went as the wind, but softer than the softest breeze. The little clouds waved to it, the little stars peeped at it, and the sea and land far below went flying by, till at last the balloon and Peter came to the edge of the world, to the house where the great Mother Sun lives, with her children.

Mother Sun was sitting by her door, telling her children where they were to go that day. All the little sunbeam children were gathered round her, listening to their tasks, ready to start on their journeys.

When Peter stepped out of the little door a tiny sunbeam girlie ran up to him and said, "How nice that you came, Peter!"

Her hair was yellower than California poppies, and curlier than a lamb's wool; her eyes were blue as the sea, and her little white robe flickered flashes of light when she moved.

Peter said "Thank you" to her, and made his bow to Mother Sun. Mother Sun smiled at him, and said he was just in time to hear what the sunbeam children were to do for their day's work. "But you must not play with them now," she said, "it is almost time for them to start." So Peter stood very still and watched and listened.

First Mother Sun spoke to a tall, shining sunbeam boy: "You, Joy-of-Morning," she said, "speed to the ends of the earth to the bleak mountain that rises from the forest, and search out the lost traveler who lies there exhausted and afraid. Warm his numb hands, shine on the chill fog around him, and pierce it till he sees the light on the ocean far away, and knows how to choose his path."

Joy-of-Morning lifted his bright head and waved his hand like a flash of a bird's wing, and in the instant he was gone.

"Comfort-of-Watchers," said Mother Sun. A lovely sunbeam girl, strong and red-cheeked, with her robe bound up with flowers, leaned forward. "Do you pass to the island in the midst of the sea you know of; in the poor fisherman's cottage a woman lies waiting for the morning, sick and helpless. Whisper through the pane that light is on the sea, day breaks, help is near; pass in, and drive out the gray shadows from the room; touch her cheek and give the message that warmth and joy have come again."

Comfort-of-Watchers smiled sweetly, so sweetly, caught up her flowers, and with outstretched arms, was away.

"My Harvesters," said Mother Sun, and instantly a band of sunbeam boys stepped forward, their hair shining like copper and gold, wands in their hands, like sheaves of

wheat, but radiant so that they blinded the eye. "Hasten to the field of the old man upon the prairie beyond the muddy stream, on the far side of the great hills, and work there all day," said Mother Sun. "Leave not one spear of golden grain unripened when I call you home; touch all. Be swift, for your task is great."

The shining band of harvesters raised their magic sheaves in one swirl of light, and sped away.

After them Mother Sun sent band after band of her children to ripen the fruits on the trees, the berries in the fields, the fruits in the gardens. They went with a flash and a smile, till all the air around Peter seemed to be shining and smiling. Then Mother Sun beckoned to two smaller sunbeam children, a dear little golden girl and boy.

"Run, Cheer and Delight," she said, "find out the hidden spot in the dark woods where the little nest of birds wait for the mother bird that was shot yesterday. Pet

them, warm them, make them strong to fly; tell them to try, try, try! Do not leave till they are brave, for they must take care of themselves now."

Little Cheer and Delight clapped their hands, and with arms round each others' necks darted away.

Then came the darling tiny sunbeam girlie who had smiled at Peter. "I am not too little, what for me, dear Mother?" she said.

Mother Sun put her hand on the curly hair. "None is too little to serve," she said. "Your task is to go to the big gray city and find the little house that stands in the court behind all the grand ones. Enter the window under the eaves, and find the baby who lies in a crib, all alone while his mother works. Play with him; make him reach his hands to you, teach his eyes to follow you about the coverlid; find the little piece of glass his mother has hung by the window and shine through it so that the pretty

colors go dancing over the room. Red, blue, orange, violet, and many more they must be. Keep the little one happy and quiet till your time to rest."

The little sunbeam girlie blew a kiss to her mother, another to Peter, and danced away. Peter stared after her golden head, but it shone so that it hurt his eyes. He began to rub them — and suddenly he woke.

He was in his own room, and no rosy balloon was in sight.

But through the window a little flicker of golden sunlight was dancing on Peter's glass paper-weight, sending blue twinkles right in his eyes. "Which one are you?" said Peter, "I did n't hear her tell you to do that!" And then he laughed, for of course he knew it was only a dream.

THE WIND AT WORK

THE little girl and boy kneel on the window seat and look down on the boats in the harbor. Every one has its nose pointing to the east. They are sniffing the wind, father says; wherever the wind comes from, that way all the boats' noses will be turned.

In the harbor is the Joan, the green and white rowboat father takes the children in; and the twin sail boats, Eagle and Owl, graceful as swans; and as many as twenty fishing boats, black and swift, piled with nets and lobster cages; besides dories and motor boats more than I can count.

And all these boats are sniffing the wind, which comes from the east, straight out to sea. Nothing stops that wind, or gives it any bad smells, all the way to England. So fresh and salty and good it is that it turns pale cheeks to red and brown, and makes dull eyes bright as jewels. It tosses the waves and ruffles the poplar leaves on the tree by the door; it scurries the fleecy clouds across the sky. And all the while it seems to be playing, it is working for the world, working good for the great earth and all the children of men who live on it.

The little girl and boy have a song to sing about the wind, that tells some of the work it does. They sing it, looking out the window at the boats in the harbor.

WIND SONG

I AM the Wind that blows so high,
Puffing the clouds about the sky,
Turning the windmills round so fast,
Filling the sails as I go past,
Wafting the fragrance of the flowers
Into the weary city doors,
Driving the smoke and smells away,
All on a windy day!

I am the Wind that blows so low,
Dusting the daisies as I go,
Cooling the children's golden heads,
Soothing the sick in fevered beds,

Frothing the waves upon the beach,
Piling the mosses in your reach,
Rolling the shells for happy play,
All on a breezy day!

I am the Wind that blows so loud,
Bringing the fog and rain and cloud,
Sweeping the rocks and trees and soil,
Cleansing the world of stain of toil.
Foam of the rain and water's rush
Follow my mighty scrubbing brush!
This is the Lord's house-cleaning way,
All on a stormy day!

When my children were four and five years old, we used this song as a picture song, or picture dance, if I may apply the word to their rhythmic but inaccurate motions. We sang it to the tune of "Come, Birdie, Come and Live with Me," in waltz time. And they skipped in time, using their hands and arms in appropriate gestures as the lines suggest. It was a pretty game. The first verse suggests waving arms and hands held high, while at the second they make a number of pretty bending, caressing movements. The third verse gives a chance for whirling and for vigorous sweeping gestures.

PETER'S VISIT TO MOTHER WIND'S HOUSE

THIS is a dream Peter had, after he had been sailing with Father.

He was standing on the hillside again, looking out at the water across the wild roses and bayberry bushes, when the little rosy balloon appeared, and floated straight to him.

In at its little door he stepped, and, as before, the little balloon grew large, large, till it was like a great house; and all its sides were windows, curtained with pinky clouds, and with rose-colored cushioned seats beneath. Peter curled up on the seat, rested his head on his hand, and looked at the wonderful things they passed.

Out and away floated the magic balloon, past the clouds, over the mountains, away and away, to the other side of the world. Beyond the other side of the world it came at last to the Wind's House. And there it settled soft as a feather, and Peter stepped out, where Mother Wind sat at her porch, with her wind-children around her.

The wind-children were all moving, hither and thither, with wavy movements, so that

Peter could not tell whether he was looking at the same one for an instant at a time. They wore dresses of pearly colors, like clouds at dawn, and the dresses moved so lightly that Peter could not see at all what they were like,—only the soft, pearly colors.

Mother Wind was playing with the littlest wind-child, who tossed a great silver ball into her lap, and caught it again when Mother Wind threw it. The ball floated like a bubble from their hands, but it always settled in Mother Wind's lap, and always fell in the littlest wind's hands.

The littlest wind-child danced up to Peter, and stood wavily before him. Her hair was dark like the first edge of night, and full of ripples.

"I am little Southwest Breeze, Peter," she said, "I 've often played with you in summer time; don't you remember how I slip my fingers through your hair? Sometimes I run over the smooth sea-floor, and it dimples all up to laugh at me. I make you

sleepy, funny boy!" And with a laugh the littlest wind puffed her breath at Peter, but very softly. Oh, how warm and soft, and sweet-smelling and drowsy that breath was! Peter half shut his eyes, and the little Breeze danced and laughed to see him.

Just then a tall wind-child came up to them. His hair was all about his face, so that Peter could only see his black eyes now and then. His body gleamed like copper through the wavy garment he wore, not at all like the littlest wind's rosy limbs.

"I am South Wind," he said, in a sharp, sighing voice. "I come from the white desert where the sand and the sun blaze always; I pass the tropic islands where the coral reefs lie naked in the sun; I fly over great fields of flowers but bring no cooling to them. I am the breath of the heat."

"He has much work to do," said Mother Wind; "he must melt the ice and snow when Earth is weary of their wrapping. He has to work with the sun-children long

hours to set the water streams free. But he is a little mischievous."

"Am I?" said the South Wind, "Ha, ha! Let me touch you with my nice warm hand, Peter!"

He touched Peter's cheek with his finger. Ugh! It was hot almost to scorch. Peter felt smothered, just to see South Wind so near.

"Be quiet, son," said Mother Wind, "Cool his cheek, East Wind."

As she spoke, a gray-robed wind-girl advanced softly toward Peter, and South Wind vanished. The East Wind's eyes were gray. They had blue lights in them when she smiled, and though her hair waved like a mist about her face, Peter could see how brave and young it was.

East Wind pushed her hair from her face and said, "I will cool the burning." And she waved her hand lightly over Peter's head. And all at once a soft, cool fog lay on his hair and cheeks, and he smelled the salt

of the sea, and the strong tang of seaweed. She waved her hand again, and Peter felt like shouting for joy, so cool and bracing was the air around him.

"Oh, dear East Wind, I would love to play with you," he cried.

"I am more than a playmate," answered East Wind, "I have a great deal to do when my brother has been too much about; I have to search out the hidden places in cities and breathe life again into little children and sick people who have fainted at his lingering. And the cleaning I have to do! Dear, dear, you men-people are so helpless! Besides, I am the wings of the Storm and have to serve her. She cannot travel without us, and we all carry her when she bids us. But I do like to play, Peter! All the beautiful white sail-boats are my toys!"

"And mine!" Another wind-child came pushing East Wind away. He was taller than she, with brown hair and red lips, and his robe was richer in its pearly colors than

the others. "I am a good playmate, too, Peter," he said, "don't you remember your friend Northwest Wind? I come from the great prairies and the far mountains, across mighty lakes and rivers, and over wonderful forests of fragrant pines. I bring you the bluest skies, the brightest sun, the white caps on the ocean. I am cool and fresh but have no chill, and though I am strong, I do not give my wings to the storm. Play with me, Peter! Play and dance!"

And the merry Northwest Wind reached out his hands to Peter, and Peter felt himself lifted and swayed back and forth in a wonderful dance. It was so gay, so gay! And how cool and dry the air was! Peter smelled apples and hay, and some kind of sharp, pickly smell like mother's kitchen on a September day. He wanted to dance forever.

"Dearest Northwest Wind," he said, "I love you, too! Stay with me!"

But as he spoke his playmate leaped away, and all the little wind-children drew

close to their mother. A strange wind-girl was striding forward, her tall figure wrapped in a robe that seemed shot through with gleams of violet light. Her hair was yellower than flax, her eyes as blue as steel, her skin as white as snow.

"I too can play," she said, and as she spoke Peter thought he heard sleigh bells. "I come from the land of eternal ice, I travel across unmelting snow. I know the polar bear well, and the Eskimo children are mine. I make great sport of the lakes and rivers when my time comes; they wrestle with me, but I bind them in my ice chains till some of my brothers come to aid them. Few love me for the work I do, for I am cold, cold; yet I work. These others would have the Earth worn to her death with their pranks and their dances if I did not protect her. I lock her away from them and give her rest. I make the snow roads firm for the lumbermen to drag the great trees from the forest. I am the North Wind."

Peter was afraid of the North Wind. While she spoke the lights flickered and gleamed in her garments, and the air was sharp and still like a winter day. But he did not want to be rude, so he said, timidly, "I am sure you do a great deal of good."

"Are you?" said the North Wind, "then come with me!"

And she stretched out her hand to Peter.

Peter shivered all over, and shrank back. An icy arrow seemed to shoot from her hand to his very heart.

"Oh, little Southwest Breeze, come quickly!" he cried. "Warm me, or I die!"

Little Southwest Breeze moved from her mother's knee, but the North Wind turned her steely eyes on her, and the little sister hid behind her mother's skirt. Peter felt the cold stealing through his veins, freezing, freezing.

"Fie, my daughter!" said the Mother of Winds, sternly, "leave little Peter alone!

West Wind, bring your summer cloak to warm him."

At her words the cold North Wind strode away, and a laughing boy came running to Peter, with a little cloak of fleecy white and fawn and rose. He threw it around Peter's shoulders with a merry toss, and instantly Peter was all cozy warm! Not hot, not sleepy-drowsy, but just summery warm. The wind-boy nodded his bright brown head at him, and looked kindly from his gray-blue eyes. He was younger than Northwest Wind, but he resembled him. Only his motions were gentler, and his hair brighter.

"Better now, Peter?" he said, touching Peter's face with his brown hand. What a nice touch that was! It felt like a mother's kiss.

"I 'll dance with *you*, darling wind!" said Peter, happily.

"Well you may," said the wind-boy, "for I am your companion all the long

summer days. I am West Wind. Many a time we've raced together over fields of buttercups, Peter! I drive your little sail-boat across the pond when you play. I stir up all the sweet smells of clover and sweet brier for your mother to smell at in the morning. I fly your kite, and — come on, have a game!"

His hand took Peter's, lightly, and Peter found that his feet could fly! Away they danced, whirling and swaying and darting, like swallows in flight, and all the while the little cloak of summer fluttered from Peter's shoulders, with its cozy warmth.

Faster and gayer they danced, merrier and merrier, till all at once Peter laughed aloud.

Well! Where was he? Who was that laughing with him? Mother, to be sure, bending over him in bed! And it was full morning, and he was rolled like a puppy in his soft coverlid. Well, well, well!

So Peter knew it was just a dream. Was n't it a nice one?

When Christ was Born of Mary Free

OLD CHRISTMAS CAROL

WHEN Christ was born of Mary free,
In Bethlehem that fair citie,

Angels sang there with mirth and glee,
"In excelsis Gloria."

Chorus.

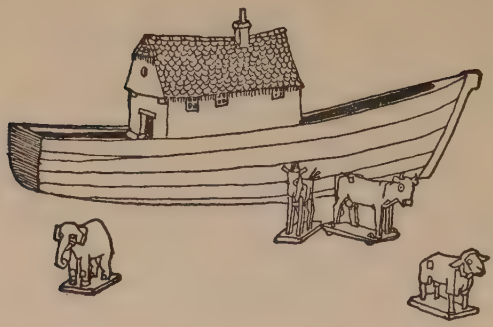
"In excelsis Gloria,
In excelsis Gloria,
In excelsis Gloria,
In excelsis Gloria."

Herdsmen beheld these Angels bright,
To them appearing with great light,
Who said, "God's Son is born to-night
In excelsis Gloria.

"The King is come to save mankind,
As in Scripture truths we find,
Therefore this song we have in mind,
In excelsis Gloria.

"Then, dear Lord, for Thy great grace,
Grant us in bliss to see Thy face,
That we may sing to Thy solace,
In excelsis Gloria."

The Noah's Ark



THERE was once a little girl named Alice, who had a Noah's Ark for Christmas. She was very fond of it. She liked to play with the little wooden animals better than with her dolls. Especially she liked to play with the horses and cows and sheep and dogs.

The next Christmas, when her big uncle asked what she wanted Santa Claus to bring her, she said, "Another Noah's Ark." So the kind uncle bought her a larger Noah's Ark at the toy store, with more and prettier animals in it, made of wood, and nicely painted.

The little girl loved it dearly, and played with it more than any other toy. She liked it so well, that next Christmas, when the big uncle said, "What shall I bring you for Christmas?" she said again, "Another Noah's Ark!" The uncle laughed very much at that. "Surely you don't want another!" he said. But the little girl said she surely did.

So on Christmas there was another big beautiful Noah's Ark for her, with still larger and more beautiful animals, of painted wood. And the little girl played with them all, the new ones and the old ones, and loved them all.

As long as she was little enough to play with toys at all, she continued to like her animals best, and she never tired of them. Her favorite game was to play she had a wonderful farm, a stock farm, where there were all the best animals in the world. She had fine cows, splendid horses, clever dogs, fat sheep, fatter pigs, and pretty hens and doves and ducks and geese.

Well, all little girls grow up, you know, if you give them time, and this one did. She grew to be a big girl at school, then a bigger girl at college, and then a young woman, graduated from college. The toys had been put away for a long long time, now.

About this time she began to want to do some work in the world. Alice was very smart and she had learned a good many things, so she wanted to be useful. Of all the things she wanted to do, she would have liked most to raise animals, and live on a little farm, all her own. But whenever she talked about it people laughed; they said a girl could n't run a farm. Father did n't laugh; he said he believed she *could* run a farm. But he said no one could do it nowadays without money to begin on, and money they did n't have. Alice knew this was true. So she went to work in an office, and began to save her money carefully, so that in a few years she might have enough

to start a very little farm. And every evening she studied how to be a farmer.

By and by Christmas was near; and just then the big uncle came home from South America. He had been away ten years, and he was a good deal bigger and older, but he was as kind as ever. And one of the first things he said to the girl who used to be a little girl was, "What shall I bring you for Christmas?"

Now the girl had heard her father say that Uncle Will had grown rich in South America, and she remembered how kind he was, so she did not want to ask for anything, because she knew he would go and buy her the very best of whatever she asked for. And that would seem like taking advantage. So she would not tell him anything that she wanted, though she would have liked some new furs, or a set of books. But still he kept asking and asking, and at last the girl remembered about the times when she was a little girl, and she began to

laugh very hard. "Please send me a Noah's Ark," she said.

Uncle Will laughed too, and kept on laughing a long, long time. "All right, my dear," he said, "I will." And every few days he would say, "Sure you want a Noah's Ark?" She knew his teasing ways, so she always said, "Yes, sure."

To her mother she said, "I should n't be a bit surprised if Uncle Will carried out the joke, and brought me a little Noah's Ark on Christmas." And her mother said she would n't be surprised either.

But he did not. On Christmas morning he came early to the house, with flowers for mother, a gift for father, and nothing for Alice. But when he had exchanged "Merry Christmases," he said, "I have planned an excursion for Alice, an automobile ride out into the country for supper at a nice little place I know. I hope she will accept my Christmas present."

Alice was delighted. She had not had

many automobile rides, and she loved the country more than all other places in the world.

So after dinner all the party was bundled and wrapped, and they started off with Uncle Will in his big brown car.

They rode fast, through the crisp Christmas weather, and it seemed as if Uncle Will had some particular time in his mind, for he looked at the big clocks in every town, and sometimes he put on speed, and then again he would slow down a little.

At last, when Alice was getting very curious to know where they were going, the machine turned unexpectedly in at a small road in the pretty old town of Woods Farms, and then in a moment it stopped before a small brick house which stood close to the road. It was a wonderfully pretty brick house, and though it stood so near the road in front there were fields on fields stretching away behind it.

"Oh, is this an inn?" said Alice. "It is

the dearest place I ever saw! How nice of you to bring us!"

"Glad you like it," said Uncle Will.

As they got out of the car, Alice caught sight of a fine-looking barn near the rear of the house. It was rather new, and had many windows in it.

"Oh, Uncle," said Alice, "will they let us look in the barn? I know they must have stock there, by the windows."

"We will look the very first thing," said Uncle.

Straight to the barn they went. Over the large door was a name, but Alice did not see it because Uncle called her attention to something just then. A strong, pleasant-looking man met them at the door, and took off his cap to Uncle as if he knew him. "Just in time, sir," he said, "they are all here and ready."

Alice did not have time to wonder, for what she saw on the great clean floor was so fascinating that it took her breath away.

The barn was full of animals! And they were all in the main building, lined up like a procession. Of course they were tied by halter ropes, but they were so gentle and beautiful that it seemed as if they stood there of their own will, to show their visitors how fine they were.

First stood two splendid cart horses; great beauties from Normandy, with kind eyes and glossy coats, and mighty muscles. Next stood two sweet-breathed Jersey cows, handsome and gentle as children. Behind them were a pair of sheep, a big Southdown mother and the darlingest fat little baby lamb. Next were two fat, sleek pigs, that could n't keep so still as the others, and made little grunts of curiosity and conversation.

By the time Alice got to the pigs her eyes were fairly shining. "Why do they have all these beauties out here?" she asked. "And how did it happen that there are two of everything? See, there is a hen and a

rooster, a duck and a drake, two turkeys, two geese, — why, mother, there are even two dogs." For just at this moment two wonderful puppies came from somewhere in the barn and threw themselves on Alice with funny little barks and wriggles of joy.

"Do you like them?" said Uncle.

"Like them," said Alice, "why, Uncle, they are prize winners, every one; don't you see they are blooded stock?"

"Good girl," laughed Uncle Will, "I did not know you were so keen. Alice, look at the name over the door."

Alice turned, and read over the inner door, in brown lettering on a green sign, "THE ARK."

"Why, — how strange! What a quaint name!" she said. "It just goes with the animals, 'two by two.' What interesting people must own this place; whose inn is it?"

"It is n't an inn," said Uncle Will,

taking her hand. "It is a Noah's Ark, Alice dear, — your Christmas present from me."

"A Noah's Ark — Uncle — you don't mean — you *can't* mean to give me all this!"

"I certainly do," said Uncle, "and if you will just 'step lively, ladies,' I'll show you the inside of your ark house!"

But what do you suppose Alice did? She began to cry! — Harder than she had ever cried before. Uncle was terribly frightened, and mother took her in her arms, but Alice suddenly raised her wet face and laughed. "I'm crying for happiness, Uncle, dearest," she said, "this is a fairy tale come true."

Indeed it seemed like it. For in the house were all the things a nice girl would love: quaint furniture, pretty china, flowers, and a whole bookcase of books on farming. There were bedrooms for mother and father, for Alice, and for Uncle Will when he

was n't in South America. And there was a cozy porch for summer.

Uncle said the house had been built over from an old one by a man he knew, and then after the family had bought furniture to fit every room, and had built a fine new stock barn, they were called by business to Chicago, and had to sell. Uncle said he heard about it the very day Alice had said she wanted the Noah's Ark, and it fitted his plans for her so perfectly, that he bought it that same day. And then he sent all over the country for the finest animals of every kind, and hired an experienced man to take care of them. The man was to stay and work for Alice, and his wife was to help in the house.

I can't begin to tell you what they talked about that lovely Christmas afternoon, or how Alice exclaimed and laughed, and cried again, or how she went from one room to another, upstairs and down, admiring her Noah's Ark. Or how she made Uncle Will

choose his chair and nook and room, and how Uncle Will said it had been the dream of his life to have a New England home to come to when he needed rest; and how he said it could n't be quite perfect unless there was a nice girl in it, and a kind mother, and a good father to make it safe. Really, it was too happy to tell, for there was so much of it.

But I can tell you what they had for supper!

Alice set the table in her own new dining room, with the pretty china, and then in the kitchen she found that Uncle Will had stocked the pantries with everything a housekeeper could wish. Mother had been in the secret, and had helped him make out the orders. So, with the bundles mother had smuggled into the car, they had a perfect Christmas supper. There was cold roast goose and crimson glowing jelly, and hot tea and toast; and then little mince pies heated in Alice's oven, a great basket of

red apples from the apple cellar, with cider made on the farm, and nuts from mother's bundle.

When it was all over and cleaned away, Alice did not want to leave. She wanted to begin living at once in her Noah's Ark. So mother promised that they would all get moved out before New Year's, and begin the new year in the Ark. Uncle Will said that suited him perfectly.

All the way home, with the golden Christmas moon shining softly, and the Christmas candles twinkling from the windows, Alice sat by Uncle Will, her hand touching his arm; and all the way, her heart said, "Bless him for his Christmas gift to us all! God bless him for his great goodwill, and help me make a happy home for him in the beautiful 'Noah's Ark,' — my Noah's Ark!"

THE END

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